T CITIES

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

NEW YORK · ALFRED A KNOPF · MCMXXVIII

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QUIET CITIES

BOOKS BY

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

Novels

THE THREE BLACK PENNYS

THE LAY ANTHONY

LINDA CONDON

MOUNTAIN BLOOD

JAVA HEAD

CYTHEREA

THE BRIGHT SHAWL

BALISAND

TAMPICO

Shorter Stories

THE HAPPY END

WILD ORANGES

TUBAL CAIN

THE DARK FLEECE

QUIET CITIES

Belles-Lettres

SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LA HABANA

FROM AN OLD HOUSE

ALFRED · A · KNOPF · PUBLISHER

QUIET CITIES

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

NEW YORK · ALFRED A KNOPF · MCMXXVIII

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES
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FOR

Ralph Van Vechten

ETERNALLY AMERICAN

I.

ONE

LATELY IT was my necessity to return suddenly to the present from the tranquillity of early Pittsburgh. Actually I had been lost for a year in the pasts of nine American cities; but Pittsburgh was the latest to occupy me; and it, more sharply than the others, made clear the remarkable change which, in a period almost too short to be regarded as historic, had overtaken the United States. Thomas Armit, who lived in Pittsburgh in Eighteen hundred, would not have been impressed with the tranquillity of what he knew and had seen — a succession of forts and cabins and fighting isolated in the wilderness. All his existence had been founded on battle, public and private; his maturity and early Pittsburgh were affairs of ceaseless alarms; he was, like the first Fort Pitt, scarred with arrows and strife. Thomas Armit, who was an old man when Mr. Jefferson assumed the Presidency, had no ability to see into the future, and so he was certain that Pittsburgh had already grown too crowded for reasonable living. In Eighteen hundred! The drays, he said, made it dangerous for a person to cross Market Street. Market Street, then, was an innocent reach between log buildings and gardens; the drays mostly were drawn by oxen.

No, old Thomas Armit couldn't see into the future; but I had been gazing very steadily into the past; and a

great deal that was hidden from him I could realize and measure. The dangers, the wars, that surrounded him seemed simple, pastoral, to me. Indians and the French and then the British. Passages through forests and river fords; fighting in clearings and in ambush. It was all direct and uncomplicated; friends and enemies were marked by race and color; some men bought and others sold; there were the high and the low; and women, measured by a single and convenient standard, were either good or bad. There was, in reality, almost none of the high, none outside the commander at the Fort and those known only by rumor; rich men had no existence; the idle men were Indians. Women owned no leisure and their brightest and best dress was calico. In Pittsburgh in Seventeen fifty-eight.

By Eighteen hundred, of course, that had changed — there were silk and carriages and dancing-masters. But there wasn't, yet, a servant in any of the kitchens; women still cooked for and waited on their husbands and fathers and brothers and sons. They cooked and swept and bore large numbers of children. A great many died, but equally a great many survived. The metal of family was stronger — it was hammered into a harder material — than is common now. Love, a dangerous and self-indulgent word, was not then familiar. Girls married at fourteen; by fourteen they had accomplished six years of practical domestic work; and at sixteen the boys drifted away on keel boats or vanished farther west. An even division of labor rested on men and women, except where the balance was heavier on the feminine side, and children were protected rather than supported.

It was, as I have indicated, severe, and yet — innocent of comparison with the present — it was borne with fortitude and even song. I wrote my account of Thomas Armit in a quiet house set in a garden; it was surrounded by peace and security; no one came there to interrupt me. I could move from the pleasant room where I worked, a dining-room really, to a cool dark drawing-room in the Victorian manner, and leave that for a garden-seat private with hedges and bright with flowers. My pens and blank-books were put in convenient order, all necessary references and facts about Thomas Armit were typewritten and laid in readiness for use. When it was hot I closed long glass doors subdued with curtains; in the afternoon the windows were put up and I heard the stir of air or the fall of rain in the maple trees.

None of that luxury had existed in the past I had tried to recreate. Indeed, there were no writers. There were, generally speaking, no books. No one had time to read through the day and there was almost no light at night. The whole present world of books, of novels, and of readers came later. There was, in consequence, except in rare individuals, no learning. Formal education didn't exist. Men were crude and spoke a crude language; women were principally superstitious. Speech had no grammar and no fine shades of meaning. The times were ignorant of the first and, in the simplicity of its objects and attainments, had no use for the second. The religion was free from metaphysics. It was hardly more than the wailing of hymns, without an organ, raised against the opposed indifference of the forest.

Taken, suddenly, back into that past I would be both outraged and helpless. I could not, it was probable, continue to live. A hundred and fifty years ago, in western Pennsylvania, I should have managed to get myself killed in the course of a single winter. I could not have survived the food nor withstood the cold. I could not have found my way back to Pittsburgh from the immediately surrounding forest. A Mingo squaw would have collected my scalp. Actually I should have detested and dreaded every aspect of that existence; but looking back on it from the safety and seclusion of my house I pictured it with longing and thought of it with regret. When I finished writing about it and regarded the life I inhabited and knew, I was depressed by a profound sense of degeneration and loss.

The gain, it seemed to me, was wholly in my surroundings; the loss was within myself — for every added comfort and safety there was a corresponding weakness in my own endurance and courage and frame. My existence was so arranged that the extremes of heat and cold never overtook me. I had no need of the power of resistance and it deserted me. It died. Thomas Armit, when he was Pack-horse Master between Fort Cumberland and Pittsburgh, had often, with his body, broken the ice in shallow mountain rivers, led his horse through the water and then ridden until nightfall. He had slept in the woods oftener than he had known a bed. He had slept without cover on green boughs in the snow, and he had waked in March water.

It would seem, I must admit, that all the advantage lay with the present and with me: I had an entire and lux

urious house in which to write; I never, unless I chose, had to walk; my exercise was a little golf, a mere game where even the implements, the clubs, were carried for me. I had, among other things, delicate and carefully prepared food in an amazing variety; it was brought to me — while I sat after the arduous labor of writing — by an individual paid and dressed to wait upon me; I had immaculate and elaborate damask and fresh and ornamental plates for ornamented and fresh courses; and at the end it wasn't really necessary for me to light the match for my cigar. I could have a silver lighter brought on a silver tray.

The weight of advantage certainly lay against Thomas Armit; and yet, with the perversity inseparable from human desire, I envied him. I envied his physical power and quickness, the keenness of his vision, his simple and vivid and romantic knowledge. That, however, was not romantic to him — exact and silent passages through the forest, dropping a canoe down white rapids, killing painted Indians decorated with feathers, were commonplace details, entirely realistic and monotonous necessities. I should have liked Thomas Armit's bark cabin and his ingenious trading with the Delaware and Shawanese tribes. Lying precariously within the walls of Fort Pitt, the night glaring with fire arrows and hideous with screeches, was no worse, I was convinced, to him than the ills of the present seemed to me. I should rather, in other words, have a constitution to support hardship than exist debilitated by a protection against the physical elements of life. I would gladly give up the pleasures of art for the privilege of a sharp vigor. I'd rather have

remembered the bagpipes on Grant Hill, when Fort Duquesne fell, than any conceivable symphony.

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BEFORE Thomas Armit had arrived at Pittsburgh, on the heels of General Forbes, a completely placid town of gilded weather-vanes and orderly brick gables was reflected on a smooth loop of the Hudson River. Albany, too, had lain in the shadow of the French and Indian menace; but that, with the investment of Quebec, was forever ended; the Dutchmen, who were so fast becoming English, moved securely through streets at once paved and pastoral. The English influence was increasing, but the Dutch was still vigorous — the language of Holland was spoken from the pulpit of the traditional church and in the town Council chamber. The difference between that Albany and the West Chester I had known was infinitely smaller than the contemporary differences in early western and eastern Pennsylvania. I could have lived with a degree of ease, and an immense benefit, in the house owned by Claes Mey.

That time, when Claes's daughter Angenietje involved herself with an ensign in Lord Howe's forces, was a period of singular domestic quiet, of long, peaceful days filled with small, adequately rewarding duties. Adequately and no more. No one was driven out of a reputable leisure by the promise of extraordinary returns and profits. There was — more impressive to me than any other fact — no noise. No noise! There was no possibility, no hope, of hurry. Albany was so quiet that

the English regimental bands, playing in the removed Meadows, made a stir and a scandal on Sunday. It was so peaceful that Thomas Evell's scarlet coat created discord in the Mey dwelling.

The discord of current improvement was loud about my own house: the road below the lawn, within my memory a country lane turning through meadows and orchards to the Welch Mountains, had become a wide thoroughfare of concrete. Wakeful at night, all night I could hear the roar of motors dropping down the hill and pounding up the farther rise. Sudden and blasting horns broke into the earliest dawn. When, by necessity, I went into Philadelphia, I was driven over a concrete expanse never within the limits of a not unreasonable law; I heard the smooth clamor of my passage, the wail of the horn, with a small incurable sense of uneasiness; I was always troubled by a faint dread at the rapidity of that progress. Such speed, it seemed to me, was almost as destructive as noise. But the pressure of the present, its opportunities, swept aside individual protest; it was hardly possible to drive with a horse and buggy on concrete; I was obliged to take advantage of my own times.

There were, of course, a great number of people, principally young, who did not agree with me about the present. What I felt was destructive they enjoyed; they liked what I secretly dreaded. The younger feminine element, in reality, was more unconcerned, more adventurous, than the current masculine spirit. I found myself, lately, in a small and very swift automobile at night; and, while I was torn between a bitter necessity to protest and a dislike of an apparent timidity, I realized that

the charming young person driving was in her appropriate and most relieving element. She drove inattentively, with one knee swinging over the other and a cigarette in an often otherwise unengaged hand. I said at last, resentfully, that a needless risk was sheer folly, and she smiled at me with a candid charm. You couldn't, she pointed out, live forever. Her fine confident profile and gold-red hair were like a challenge, a question, upon the darkness. I couldn't answer it. Yes, I should have been better in the Albany of Claes and his wife, Liedya Mey, for there I should have had no escape from my intrinsic necessities.

It was difficult to realize that an actual time of such social simplicity had existed, a time and a city free from the pretensions which had, among other things, destroyed practically all the honesty and pleasures of human intercourse. I lived, for example, at great pains and expense, in a house that absolutely contented me, an ideal house for peaceful happiness. In the evening its rooms, the gardens, were beautiful with serenity; it was calm with books, fragrant in the spring with lilacs, and green in winter with boxwood. Yet night after night I went out and deserted it; I was eternally bound for other houses that suited me far less well; I wearied myself talking to people who were no more than a charge on my vitality. I was, I had no doubt, equally a disproportionate charge upon them. It wasn't, again, my fault, nor was it theirs — it was the unfortunate color of the times. Times hurried and insincere and mainly hypocritical.

The Mey household was innocent of entertainment in the modern sense; there was no round of entertainments

at all for the sober and the married. Albany was too frugal; it had no money for superficial pleasure. It drank, for example, in family; Hollands gin was wedded to no more than water, hot or cold; the taverns were closed at nine o'clock; any Dutchman who wavered on his way home was fined and admonished. Drunkenness did, naturally, exist; but it was a respectable drunkenness limited to single men and to the heads of families. It was an end in itself or an accident; an isolated act and a falling from grace; and it was promptly retired to bed.

Claes Mey's house had an inevitable portico for summer evenings, and a garden at the back geometrically brilliant, in season, with tulips; supper was early; the evening brought a calm and enforced inactivity. There were then, unavoidably, impatient men, but their impatience did them little good. If they were in a fever to get to New York they had a choice between a lugger down the river or a long ride by horse over a trace too narrow and rough for wheels. Even the luggers didn't sail by advertisement — they left, and returned, when their owners and cargoes decided. Passengers were by the way.

The children of Albany went in companies, pleasure guilds of youth, to the river islands, the boys hunted through the day and the girls sewed and prepared supper, they drifted home in canoes through the dusk. There were Mahikan Indians, Indian wigwams, by the fences of the merchants' country estates. The Albany children had birthday parties with their elders wholly absent, tea and chocolate and preserved fruits, nuts and cakes and cider. They sledded in winter down the steepness of Jonker

street, and the town, wrapped in furs, watched them. The girls, when they were fifteen, married; the boys married at seventeen; at seventeen they were conducting independent trading ventures with the remote and precarious tribes of the Canada border. Streets were named after ministers of the Old Dutch Church. Lydius and Westerlo. The Vossen Kil and the Rutten Kil flowed through the town under wooden bridges. The Old Dutch Church had four stoves on high posts precariously charged and raked over the gallery railing. The Koster rang the bell, standing in the center aisle, and tied the rope to a post on the left; he carried a switch for the boys and banged the stove lids. The men, during the service, wore their tall wide-brimmed hats and smoked pipes. Henry Cuyler had the key to the fire-engine house.

That, however, with Lord Howe's encampment on the river, was reaching an end: the British officers twice gave plays in the evening. The youth of Albany began to show traces of restlessness, of rebellion against Dutch precepts. Certainly Angenietje Mey, ignoring all the traditions of public decorum, upset the propriety long cherished for girls. The rebellion, however, was still more implied than actual. Pleasures were limited, frugal, and in consequence they were the greater enjoyed. Men talked quietly across streets planted with buttonwood trees; the women drew threads from fine linen bands for their caps. It wasn't exciting, and, above all, it wasn't loud. I should, now, unquestionably find it horribly dull; but the inescapable tranquillity would end the commotion in my mind, the slowness of movement reassure my spirit. I could not have hurried a lugger by a single tack down

the river; I should have had early and peaceful suppers at home. The gain, the improvement, since then meant very little to me — merely the privilege to hasten all the forces destructive to an invaluable content.

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It was practically impossible to realize that the past I had been engaged in was not engaged with the values that were supreme today. It had little concern, for example, with money. I did not mean that men then were free from avarice and the desire for luxury; I had no belief that they regarded money more indifferently; no, it simply didn't exist. There wasn't, in the present sense, any money at all. The states, even localities, issued paper notes; they were good, in decreasing value, locally; and after the Revolutionary War they became mere paper. British gold practically never found its way from a few cities on the Atlantic coast. Alexander Hamilton, really, invented American money; but it was more than a decade before his invention reached the remoter communities. Thomas Armit traded French blankets and gunpowder for beaver skins; the buying in stores, the satisfaction of all the general debts of living, was by kind. Yes, in the modern sense, there were no rich; it wasn't yet possible for the average man to grow rich. He never considered it because it was hopeless.

There was an actual democracy of labor; labor, rather than money, was exchanged: cooks didn't exist since all women cooked; almost any man was a carpenter when he wasn't by necessity something else. This, while it

lasted, bred an equality that was more than a theory. It didn't, however, last long — money, opportunity, appeared, and the character of men and life changed. Perhaps it was an improvement. Yet, together with early hardship, there was early luxury, a particularly rich and complete luxury. I was thinking of the cotton planters on the lower Mississippi, soon after Eighteen hundred, near Natchez. They had a life free from toil; the plantation-houses, set in groves of oak trees, were cool with spacious galleries; the luxury of New Orleans was at their hand; the women were charming in French muslins.

That life would have pleased me as well as Claes Mey's. Better. It had more sensual beauty and quite as much tranquillity. There was, too, the River. Sylvester Dering came into Natchez over the gangplank of a River steamboat, a traditional figure of the Mississippi. A gambler! He was at once characteristic and different from tradition — since he had come to hate gambling and was pervaded by a mystical religious force. He, like myself, had a passionate need for peace, for a rest from the eternal passage of dangerous and troubled water. His dangers, God knew, were more acute than mine, but his longing for serenity was not more vivid. He found it, for a little while, in Natchez — it made me quiet only to think of him, in precise linen with his planter's hat beside him, sitting through the late Sunday afternoon on the Bluff above the River.

I could see the streets behind him, the town, planted with China trees and bathed in a level golden light; on the right was the garden where he first saw Mary Alawayes, set in terraces and walks planted with dark green orange

trees and paler lemons; and behind the town the plantations spread out in fields of cotton blooms opening white in the dusk and darkening to purple. A pastoral and, in essence, feudal civilization. The negro slaves gave it that latter aspect. As I considered Natchez and Sylvester Dering and his momentary friend Damaris Vaun I was conscious of a certain sympathy for the institution of slavery. Then. It seemed to me to be neither inhuman nor inappropriate, I wasn't convinced of the existence of the brutalities asserted to belong to it by the different North. Even the North, I remembered, except for a few fanatics, had been indifferent to slavery. The efforts to found an Anti-slave party — in reality it was no better than a Free Soil party — had come promptly to nothing.

It seemed quite right to me for Sylvester Dering, in his effort at a new and happier life, to have his slave Juba. I thought it was an admirable relationship. Sylvester Dering, in ending all connection with the River, changed his name; he became an inhabitant of Natchez, a potential cotton planter; and it was absurd to conceive of him without a body-servant. If I had been Dering — or, rather, Isaac Cordes — I should have bought Juba and treated him very well too. It would not have occurred to me that I was subjecting a human spirit to an ignominious slavery. It would never have entered my mind. Most men, anyhow, were slaves.

I regarded Isaac Cordes with envy — a man who had left a troublesome existence and for a little while gained peace. I should have preferred, however, to keep it to its first simple form than follow Isaac in his later evangelical reach. I saw myself dark in the face and lean in the body,

dressed in white linen and riding through Natchez beside a carriage bearing my own particular Mary Alawayes, a woman as fragile and sweet as an orange flower. She, too, would have a broad hat, but tied with a broad blue ribbon under her chin; her dress, voluminous with crinoline, would be flounced apparently in white mist; her voice, like her hands, slow and full of graceful turns. A woman made out of beauty and simplicity.

My necessary attitude where she was concerned gave me pleasure as well — an arbitrary passion and care supported by long-barrelled immaculate pistols. The pistols made life so exceedingly courteous and simple. An insult, a slight almost, was final. In Natchez, when Isaac Cordes was there, duels were not only formalities: the weapons and the distance saw to that. Duelling was, of course, an evil; it was fatally abused; but I wondered if the slackness and the laxness of the present were, after all, such an enormous improvement. I wondered if, in their hearts, women preferred the present conduct of affairs.

I very well understood that, today, women were important in many more phases of existence than they had been soon after Eighteen hundred; I knew that their social and economic position was immeasurably widened; but I saw strange signs of their feeling about that. It was not, it had never been, possible to consider women aside from men; the problems of women could not be isolated from the facts of men; and it was a fact that women were discontented in the exact degree that men failed in their engagement of masculinity. It was possible for a woman to love a man without courage but it was improbable. Women did love ludicrous-appearing and impotent men

but their love was a constant apology and a shield. Women, I was convinced, had always been realistic about every quality in men except the sheer masculine virtues. That, certainly — the general absence of masculine virtues — was why they were presently discontented. In place of men there were grocers' assistants and writers.

I should, for example, have infinitely preferred to be Damaris Vaun, a Natchez gentleman and planter, than what I was. Then I could have presented myself with assurance to the lovely Mary Alawayes of my time. A beautiful feminine creature and a man of bitter courage. Ideal combination. In the event that either of us were affronted I should cross the Mississippi River to Vidalia, and there, in a grove of live oaks, shoot out my responsibility to a legend since perished. Pistols cured the curse of words; their period to all sentences was final. Any woman would rather have any man honorably dead in a duel than alive and making their private moments ignominious with explanations. The shocking truth was that women survived the men they were married to very handily. When they were past middle age they enjoyed the consequent peace and when they were younger looked forward to fresh and more satisfying adventure. A great many men, today, could be run together without making a giant.

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Men, I realized, assumed heroic proportions in the golden dusk of time; their virtue was magnified and their faults diminished by years and report until they bore no

relation to a recognizable humanity. It was necessary, in regarding them, to avoid a sentimental confusion of fact with romantic fable; yet I remained convinced that in the Washington of Andrew Jackson's first Administration men were more considerable than they are at present. It was possible, for one thing, to distinguish them each from the other. They were individuals. Their opinions were their own; they were more often than not totally different from the men around them; and they announced the differences in certain and public and unqualified terms. They had the quality of courage which belonged to the relatively free. While it was possible — in their capacity of human beings and politicians — to compromise, it was quite as possible for them to be uncompromising: a virtue almost completely lacking in the politician of today. They were, then as now, adroit; they could be circuitous at need — following the practical example of Thomas Jefferson — but equally each stood firmly on his own ground; there was never any faltering in the announcement of personal convictions. They even dressed differently, following their individual tastes and local habit: John Randolph of Roanoke wore buckskin breeches and a blue riding-coat, he sat in the Senate Chamber in boots and silver spurs, with gloves and a heavy whip, a favorite hound at his feet; Colonel Benton liked an especially high black silk stock and John Marshall swathed his throat with white cambric; Samuel Houston wore a wide hat, a quantity of ruffles, and a profusion of rings; David Crockett declined to leave off his buckskin hunting-shirt; Jackson himself, in the Senate, had tied his hair in an eel skin.

They were not afraid to look and be different; no social tyranny made them all alike in dress and speech; they were not ruled by a relentless material ambition. Not entirely. They had, naturally, the faults of the men of today; the difference lay in the fact that the present men did not have their virtues. The virtue of independence had largely disappeared. Men, now, were not so much the servants of their own individuality as they were the representatives of the forces that elected and directed and made them. They no longer dominated events. Events crushed them. Events had evolved a new type of public servant — a servant and not a master. A circuitous path led to far greater reward than formerly. Now everyone in Washington, when he spoke at all, spoke with the greatest regard for the susceptibilities of everyone else. He preferred not to speak at all: it was better to be safe. Yes, there was, today, so overwhelmingly much to be gained by safety: the luxury of a personal pride had become too expensive.

For those reasons I preferred to concern myself with the days, the Washington, of Andrew Jackson. Jackson himself was not impressive as a statesman; he was, I am afraid, ignorant of a great deal that he should have known. He did not have the almost immaculate integrity of George Washington or the political genius of Thomas Jefferson. Jackson, in his public character, was hardly better than an indomitable fighter; but that, even in an age of extraordinary personal courage, was so notable as to be rewarded by the Presidency.

He was narrow, bigoted, and unlettered; he developed, for his personal aims, a private cabinet within, or rather

outside, the Cabinet; but, on the other hand, his views were completely public. He said what he thought, particularly he expressed precisely what he felt, and that was more important for men in general than practical wisdom or economic understanding. There was a deep connection between Andrew Jackson's courage and truth: since truth, of course, might be at the same time an error. Truth was largely an attitude, a manner of approaching life rather than a comprehension. An ignorant man might be finely truthful and a wise man a source of lies. Jackson, in spirit and bearing, was truthful, and John Randolph was bitterly truthful, John Marshall was honorable with truth; their truths were different; but that made no difference to them. They were at all times plainly articulate. And for that reason, although the air about them was constantly troubled with bitter dissent, it was at the same time clear; it could be breathed with safety.

I thought, with General Washington in my mind, of an earlier decade; the winter, to be exact, of Valley Forge — the Continental Army then breathed an icy but singularly purifying air. The common soldiers with next to nothing to eat and almost literally nothing to wear were yet conscious of something sustaining in their apparently hopeless situation. Philadelphia was warm with greatcoats and bright with taverns; Philadelphia was rich; but its materialism, its power, were eventually reduced by lean and indomitable resolve. Alexander Hamilton's intellect was incredible, it was miraculous; but beside the integrity of Washington it was unimportant.

And so, when I came to consider Philadelphia, a city in which I had been born, all my interest attached itself to

Valley Forge, a locality and a symbol that gave a deathless beauty to the men faithful to it. The winter of Valley Forge was one of the historic occasions that the search of modern and sceptical scholarship was unable to dissolve. It was a solid fact. The suffering, the want, were actual; the splendor was not false. Reading the contemporary accounts of it, the journals and officers' day-books, partisan and adverse histories, I had a renewed feeling of the comparative ignominy in the engagements held out by the present. Certainly the splendor, the music, had gone. When I came to Sir William Howe, at late supper with his officers in Philadelphia, I was engaged by the bravery of their scarlet and gilt; they were officers and gentlemen in a moving and romantic and lost sense. There were, of course, admirable soldiers today, but they went to war with their rank and honors prudently concealed. They fought at a distance, like professors of mathematics; or with vapors like professors of chemistry. War, very laudably, had been made practical.

It would be a mistake to suggest that Valley Forge was the result of a passion for liberty on the part of a whole people. The contrary, as usual, was true: there were comparatively few men at Valley Forge. But then there was only one Washington. The cause of American freedom was exceedingly unpopular; it was widely regarded as a nuisance. Philadelphia was far more characteristic than the perpetually retreating Continental Army. In the face of substantial British gold, Philadelphia had little interest in a depreciating patriotic currency. It owned no confidence in the commercial soundness of an eventual independence. That, of course, gave Washington's apparently

insignificant command its imperishable lustre. The fact that the individual men were innocent of a conviction of nobility did nothing to diminish it. Novelists were aware of the nobility of their impulses, they were sensitive to the beauty of their sacrifices; but soldiers without food, unshod against the winter ice, usually relapsed into obscenities and dull complaint. Even the motive that gave General Washington his supreme opportunity was not absolutely pure; it, too, had a practical and self-serving aspect; but it got itself immediately and shiningly clad in honor.

The Continental Army needed some transcendent garment, for it was bare of scarlet and gilt. Captain Ephrim Benezet, on a tour of duty, wore an old and dilapidated dressing-gown. He possessed no distinguishable shoes. Yet he was young, young if, by necessity, a trifle severe. He had the confidence of Nathanael Greene and knew Baron von Steuben. He didn't, consequently, require an impressive mess jacket; at Valley Forge he would have had no opportunity to wear it. He lived, moreover, to be old; he came into a full recognition of his valor and incredible good luck.

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Twenty years ago I should have infinitely preferred the early romantic existence of Gaut Penny, the New Orleans of the Louisiana Purchase, to the difficulties of Captain Ephrim Benezet, in Lieutenant-Colonel William Butler's Second Pennsylvania Brigade. Gaut's adventures were laid in a tropical luxury of beauty: New Orleans could

not have been surpassed for youth and love. It had been successively French and Spanish and French again; out of those nationalities and its remote situation it made an aristocracy in the most absolutely and formal sense; it was at once passionate and gay and highly dangerous. The public squares were banked by roses and pomegranates and the gardens walled with orange trees; there were palms and avenues of magnolias; groves of myrtles; the night was perfumed with Spanish jessamines. All the exotic facts and perfumes and flowers which, twenty years ago, at once satisfied me and filled me with desire. Especially I should have dwelt with a lingering pleasure on Mariquita de la Colina, seated in the evening on the gallery of Gilbert Penny's plantation-house, smoking a thin pale-brown cigar. Twenty years ago, to be exact, I was twenty-seven, the precise age for an infatuation with a lovely Creole in a city of vanished loveliness.

I would, then, have liked the dress, the youthful exaggerated good manners, and particularly the danger. The young pallid girls who sold jessamine with jessamine in their hair were dangerous. The games of dominoes in the cafés were potential with danger. The Grand Chemin after dark was the reverse of safe. The keel-boat men of the Faubourg Ste. Marie were hasty with their knives. The polite society, floating on strains of waltzes and quadrilles, was underlaid with the constant possibility of immediate and formal death. The very qualities, the exact beauties, to bemuse the young. The young but not a man close to fifty. The charm of the merely exotic, I found, had deserted me. Palm trees no longer seduced my imagination with their dry mimicry of rain.

When I came to describe Gaut Penny in New Orleans I was aware of the charm of his time, but its fragrance was the fragrance of pot-pourri. The rose leaves were dried and preserved with spices. Finished with the episode that made Gaut's youth romantic I could see no further possibilities in him. He married Mariquita. That was all. But what more could Gaut or I demand? It was the dearest fate of youth to love and marry some delicate and beautiful girl. It was the supreme privilege of youth to take her from other impetuous young men. That was true; but writing about Gaut Penny I could not forget that it would be his fate to become prosperous and grow fat. The commission house of Casimir Penny and Sons must inevitably be successful. Mariquita, always a big girl, would grow fat too — her indolence and the indolent climate would see to that — and her maturity be hardly better than an uninterrupted and contented siesta.

I wasn't, really, greatly engaged with Gaut's affairs: I should have imagined him and known that New Orleans when I first began to write. Then, young myself, I should have been unable to think of anything more engaging than a passionate account of love in a setting of palms. I should have been convinced of its supreme importance. There was a chance, of course, that the youth was wiser than the man; at twenty-seven, it might be, I had a more instinctive and correct knowledge of values than now. Perhaps, but I doubted it. I was older, but, in addition to that, the feeling about love stories had changed. It was, in the present, difficult if not actually impossible to write one. That was, with any intelligence at all. A love story simply would not take on the shape of a sufficient impor-

tance. It was quite possible that tomorrow a superb love story would make its universally triumphant appearance; but, unhappily, it would not be written by me.

No, I gave Gaut and Mariquita, and the singularly charming city of New Orleans, my best attention, and then turned with relief to Saxegotha Laws. I had a very different, a deep, affection for that solemn youth. He was a product of pioneer America, and for that reason alone I had a strong regard for him. He knew, it seemed to me, the best boyhood conceivable — in a rude cabin and clearing on the edge of the Kentucky wilderness. There was game in the forests, fish in the clear streams, and Indians across the River. His harassed father was without sentimentality and his mother a toiling figure who sang hymns in the fire-light of evening. Saxegotha had been free in a land of incomparable magic: he brought the cow and the sheep out of the forest at dark — the sheep bells were a tone higher than the bell of the cow — he chased the squirrels and crows from the corn, weeded among the turnips and musk melons of the truck patch, warmed the ax blade for his father in winter, and owned a Sunday fustian roundabout and Marseilles pantaloons bought with the proceeds of a corner of timothy left uncut for that tremendous purpose.

There was no doubt in Saxegotha Laws's mind about love — he didn't want it. To him it resembled the girls who inspired it, a frivolous waste of opportunity. He wanted, above everything else, to get learned, since it was very privately in his mind that someday he might be a statesman. Tremendous and laudable ambition. At any rate he came to Transylvania University driven by the

need for learning; he looked on the girls of Lexington as deleterious; and, so far as he was concerned, the most deleterious of them all chose to laugh at him. At that moment nature betrayed him: his fate was not statesmanship but a girl named Lucy Challen. An insignificant-looking little girl with a great pile of money.

This had the sound of a love story, but it wasn't; it wasn't because of its attitude toward love. Love in it was a calamity. It surrounded Saxegotha Laws with ease and little by little drained the vitality of his ambition and life. He had a great house and wide green pastures and famous horses; but he didn't, in his heart, care for any of that. His vitality left him, but his memory persisted — he recalled the ring of his early determination, the sweep of his ambition, and had a deep drink at a whisky sling. A humorous resignation took the place of any activity. Love, you see, was the reward of Gaut Penny's story; it was the tragedy of Saxegotha Laws.

This, to be entirely fair, was as much the result of some deep flaw in Saxegotha as it was the fault of circumstance and Lucy. His metal was not quite hard enough; the warmth of his heart destroyed the temper of his resolve. I didn't want to be Laws any more than now I wanted to be Gaut Penny; but, on account of his memory, I preferred him to Gaut; his sense of values was better. He had, at least, the corrective virtue of irony. However, the life he cared so slightly for, the wide green pastures, spread out a pleasant panorama: honest race courses and honest whisky — I couldn't determine if Saxegotha had known the whisky with mint — and honestly partisan politics. Kentucky was west of the Allegheny Mountains and its

affairs had a ruder and more stirring vigor than life, for example, in Virginia. Kentucky never was English. Saxegotha Laws, in a sense quite impossible now, was completely American.

Love, however, which was universal, conspired to ruin him; it dominated him; and a man dominated by love, by a woman, was lost to accomplishment. If he had dominated love, his history would have been very different. Then I shouldn't have written about him in Lexington but in Washington, a senator together with Henry Clay; but, unlike Clay, he would have supported Andrew Jackson; he would have been President in Martin Van Buren's place.

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THE few days that William Henry Harrison was President were, in part, the result of a willingness in Boston, in Nicholas Elliset, to reach a compromise. General Harrison was a replica, in very pale tones, of Andrew Jackson; he had been a soldier in the West and defeated the Indians on the Wabash River and the British in Canada; and the autocratic merchants of Massachusetts chose him as a candidate that might separate the Western vote from the growing nuisance of Democracy. That was very foreign to Elliset's character, a man usually without the slightest consciousness of any necessity to compromise. Where he was concerned the opposition simply had no right to exist. When it did it was only because of the degeneration of the times. Nicholas Elliset called himself a Whig, but he was, in reality, a Federalist, a member of the party

of George Washington and Alexander Hamilton. He thought of the people, so dear — and so useful — to Mr. Jefferson precisely as he thought of the crews that manned his ships around the world: a human element only satisfactory when subjected to the sharpest discipline. They never, except through tricks at the wheel, had any rights or place on the quarter-deck.

That, for the Elliset family, in Boston in Eighteen forty, was a very successful and comfortable attitude. Nicholas was able to maintain it; Boston was organized and dominated by precisely such men as himself; it was their affair. They lived, mostly, on Beacon Hill and Summer Street, in dignified houses with a bow window to the dining-room, designed by Bulfinch; and in every case their names had been established before the Revolutionary War. They owned, in a way of speaking, the world: their flags and factors were in every advantageous harbor; and when, in the morning, followed by a servant with a market basket, Nicholas Elliset walked down to his counting-rooms in India Wharf, his augustness was easily seen. It was clear to anyone what he actually thought of Western people and inland trade.

He was, like me, near the mark of fifty, and I flattered myself that I understood his beliefs and feelings remarkably well. I should have enjoyed being a Whig, a Federalist, in Boston then. I was by birth and association a Democrat, but that fact had very little reality to me, and God knew I should have had no tendency to associate myself with the enemies of Washington. I owned no talent for Thomas Jefferson. I should have been happy with Nicholas Elliset's power, the fine details of his living,

his universal influences; and, with all that, I should have especially liked his memories, so different from what surrounded his maturity. The passages and harbors of the South Seas. The Pagoda Anchorage on the Whampoa River. The islands of the East were innocent then and naked except for casual flowers. On their silver beaches young supercargoes danced to a time wildly different from the decorum of Boston drawing-rooms.

That, for Nicholas Elliset, was a happy background and memory: it gave him a secret medium of comparison, a private ironic humor, which saved him from too much solemnity. It gave him, as well, an enormous advantage over his son Ambrose, who wanted to join the social experiment of Brook Farm. Nicholas had his own characteristic opinion of social experiments, of females in strange clothes, but he said little to Ambrose about them. He was too wise. He didn't even make clear what he thought of George Ripley, who had deserted his pulpit, of Bronson Alcott or Emerson. Elliset didn't, naturally, invite such men to his house — that would be like asking a paid orchestra for dancing to his dinner-table — and it was conceivable that he'd have been short with Ambrose.

The East, however, had touched him, and his diplomacy with his son was grave and corrupt and deadly. I understood and agreed with that. So much could be accomplished by a grave and corrupting knowledge of life and women. A cold patience was fatal to a hasty and warm and ill-considered humanity. I admired Nicholas Elliset's success and at the same time, together with him, knew that somehow it was hollow. He wasn't, with so much, sufficiently happy: formality had entered into his spirit.

He was the victim of a state which his sense of humor showed him to be sadly inadequate. He had sailed dangerously around the world; as a boy he had fought pirates with dirks; and scarcely more than a boy he had deserted reality, a reality of salt and perfumed adventure, for a pretentious and safe existence.

I should, certainly, have followed his example and cherished his secret discontent. Above all, I was engaged by his frank contempt for writers. He regarded them, and not without justice, as a sort of paid entertainers. They were not, then, very highly paid, they couldn't have Bulfinch build their houses, and so his attitude was comparatively easy to follow. It had the support of a general recognition. No one today could lay down his clear social lines; no one today, the truth was, wanted to. The orchestra had been moved to the dinner-table. The necessity for constant amusement, amusement at any price, had taken the place of a strict social integrity.

Society was far more excellent, exclusive, in Nicholas Elliset's day. An aristocratic deportment was still natural — the word gentleman had not been lowered to a term of mere sentimentality. It had, intrinsically, to do with obligation rather than humanity; Elliset owned a responsibility to his inferiors but it wasn't social. He based his life on the assumption of a complete superiority to the mass of men. Democracy had not yet conquered America. All this was natural and, I thought, wholly admirable. It was impossible now, it was impossible for me, but I envied his hard clarity. I envied the admitted certainty of his position. Servants were servants. A crew was a crew. I suffered from doubt: I saw traces of the woman in a cook,

of the man in a gardener. Writers were invited to my table and I liked them. I was a writer myself.

Nicholas Elliset was equally direct about reformers, the prophets of immediate equal justice. He knew that justice in the abstract and perfect sense could not exist. It was a chimera and he didn't propose to let it bother him. Some men had more money than others, some women were more beautiful than common, and not only was he not bothered by this, he approved of it. Why not? A few men were powerful, fortunately placed, and it was their business to govern the rest. They, the powerful, were responsible to themselves for that government. There, in reality, lay the beauty of the aristocratic attitude, there was its now departed fineness. No appeal was possible from a high personal sense of duty; it made explanation needless. Men like Nicholas Elliset had no touch of the present clamor for sympathy. They had no nervous impulse to ingratiate themselves with inferior ideas and unimportant people. They took their privileges calmly.

There were great merchants today, or, rather, only yesterday; their power was not less but more than that of those of the past; but they were not aristocrats in an exact sense. Aristocracy had disappeared the day before yesterday. A general equality had taken its place. Combinations, the people of Thomas Jefferson, were risen to influence. Even women had begun to insist that there were more notable feminine qualities than an apparent beauty. Perhaps, but not for me. It was increasingly evident that I belonged in the past. In the Boston that had occupied my thoughts or Charleston. I should have been happy in either, but not in Charleston through the years of

Reconstruction. The Civil War brought to an end the cities and times of my first preference. After that, improvement, and noise, began. The present was inaugurated. I wrote about Charleston in the Eighteen sixties because then, it seemed to me, its beauty was particularly moving, its honor strangely bright in the shadow falling upon it and on the past.

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The ruin of a long siege, of unrelenting civil conflict, was everywhere evident to John Fearnes; it lay all about his yellow brick dwelling on the South Battery. It was not only physical, the mark of cannon, but abstract: the White Point gardens were pervaded by impalpable evil; the nights were blasted with an intangible corruption. Fearnes's existence, in that destructive dark, was fantastic; he called into being, for the most laudable of purposes, powers and influences from far below the precarious safety of a thin white civilization. A civilization of the moment. He sacrificed his peace of mind — he sacrificed his mind — on an altar so old that it was crumbling at the beginning of pagan ages. It is the opinion of Charleston that he had, as well, blackened his honor. I didn't think so; but perhaps I hadn't the material, the sectional understanding, for adequate judgment. The use he made of a peculiarly dangerous knowledge, it appeared to me, lifted him above the standards of a conventional South Carolina judgment.

John Fearnes had called into being powers of darkness to combat darkness; he was fully aware of the consequent

fatality to himself; and I regarded him as a man who had held the integrity of a code, an obligation of blood, above self. I wasn't so certain of the powers of darkness. I considered them with a trace of impatience and more than a pause of doubt. I didn't, really, believe in powers of darkness. That was, as independent agents, agents without sensible bodies. I was willing to deal with the power of suggestion, the presence of hysteria and primitive impulses in a small galvanized mob, and call it juju, but beyond that my sceptical disposition prevented me from going. I had been repeatedly told that there was a negro magic, I had heard extraordinary things in Louisiana and Oriente, but I insisted, for myself, upon the most commonplace and exact explanations. The explanations, then, I simply left out of my consideration of Charleston in the disaster of Reconstruction.

Charleston was at that time, except for an occasional murderous explosion or isolated and indescribable cries, a quiet city; but its earlier tranquillity had gone. Its aristocracy, no less absolute than the breeding of Massachusetts, was vanishing; a different and loud economic world was in the uncomfortable process of birth. There was to be no place for arbitrary gentlemen luxurious on plantations of cotton. The soil of that privilege at last was exhausted. There was, actually, to be little ground for gentlemen anywhere. Leisure, together with large resources and a definite frame of mind, were necessary for gentility. The mind of Nicholas Elliset. It was hardly different in Charleston; gentlemen there were a little more sultry in their prejudices; the duel was prevalent; the climate, in other words, bore more sharply on the liver.

Charleston, in temper, lay midway between New Orleans and Boston, and for that excellent reason attracted me more than the other two. It preferred, in its cooler manner, the pistol to the colchemard; it had kept itself free, in a narrow sense, from trade. Charleston was the port, the warehouse, for South Carolina cotton; it wasn't commercial; there were no merchants, in the manner of Boston. That difference, and not the negroes, brought on the Civil War and the triumph of commerce. An aristocracy, it was discovered, was not economically sound. It wasn't planned to wring the last dollar from every transaction of benefit or need. I regretted the fall of Charleston; above everything else I should have liked to live in a state not fundamentally commercial, a state with a slightly different measure of accomplishment. Money as a means rather than an end. It seemed to me in that existence life would be less hurried than it was now; personal integrity might even take the place of a mental symbol. Men, perhaps, would return to their individual pleasures and being.

In that event I could see the return of all the qualities and spirit I best liked: superiority would be recognized; the search — at least — for truth held honorable. The mass of people would be infinitely better situated, their opinions free from the petty tyranny of organization. When the government grew oppressive, when the aristocracy forgot its obligation of justice, armed rebellion offered a masculine relief. It was immeasurably better to rebel than to sink into apathy. The mere effort of thought was priceless. All this, I firmly believed, was an aristocratic and not a democratic attitude. I agreed with Nicholas Elliset about the scope and functions of a crew.

Complete justice was, of course, an abstraction; it had never, in all the existence of humanity, been an actuality. Perhaps, since it was so cold, it was not in its perfect form even desirable. Life, quite different, was warm, full of faults and the payment for faults; life was inseparable from regret; and regret, very often, was one with beauty. Certainly beauty and loss were closely allied. It was death that gave love its great tenderness: who would be willing to face a million years in the same companionship? A million million! Death, the truth was, was greatly maligned. It was insensately feared. Still, the fear of death was one of the mechanics of keeping alive; and, while I complained about the present, I had no urgent necessity to leave it. I preferred, simply, some aspects of the past; that was why it appeared so often in my pages.

Yes, that was why I wrote about it — the past, especially, in America. It had been my enormous good fortune to live for twenty years in an American scene that resisted improvement, a locality that remained traditional, green in summer with chestnut groves and white in winter with unfretted snow. It was a countryside of hills and little valleys, with stone houses above the meadows and brick houses in town. The farmers, grown old and prosperous, once came into the town to live. Once! Now the farmers had almost disappeared. They existed simply to sell their farms for development. The bands of concrete drew more and more tightly about my house. A clear musical stream, a bank deep with grass, had lain at the end of my lawn; for years it was sweet with mint and violets; but now it was obliterated. A curbing had been ordered to take its place. West Chester was growing

more important; its old character was felt to be incongruous with the march, the rush, of events. Well, West Chester might be improved, but my memories, and twenty years, were safe. The fragrance of my bank, of the April violets and the summer mint, could not be taken from me. My life, anyhow, had been flavored by mint juleps and flowers. I could, at least, write about them. I had no intention of writing about curbs. I preferred to recreate the things I liked. They floated up from the paper and enveloped me. West Chester returned in its old simplicity.

I made dim images of the life I so vastly preferred to the one I had survived to see; I created the shadows of men instinct with an individual integrity. Lovely and tranquil girls. I forgot the improvements, the noise, crowding in upon me. The present, the noise, of course, would prevail . . . until I was protected by an ultimate peace. Already, while I was alive, I was a part with the past. I returned in affection and longing to the quiet cities of unimproved, of comparatively uncurbed, times. I had no actual illusion about their superior benefits. Thomas Armit, in Eighteen hundred, regarded the past with the exact preference I held for years which seemed to him wholly disastrous. I was possessed, really, by the fantastic desire to be young in the present and old in the past. It would be more truthful, and infinitely simpler, to say that I wanted to be always young. But young, that was, in a young land, a land marvelous and fine and unexplored. Heroic forests and clear rivers and shining mountains. America. I'd be happy to pay for that with everything, everything, the wasted present held.

II.

TWO

THOMAS ARMIT gave it as his opinion that Pittsburgh was hardly fitten to live in. It stood to reason, he said, that it wasn't healthy to crowd a thousand people and worse in a point of land intended for only a French fort. He made that declaration at Jacob Winebiddle's supper table. Jacob was his son-in-law. Thomas Armit commonly spoke in a tone of challenge: he was old, at times the challenge was thin if not actually shrill, but its spirit was vigorous and bitter. Critical. In reality he was sixty-seven; but he had had a hard life, a life of enormous physical strain; and it had bowed and wasted and scored him. His face was dark from the weather, the skin on it tight and dry over his cheek-bones and sunken at his jaw. His eyes were pale blue; but they were so small, they had been narrowed so often against the acute storms and dangers of existence, that the color left in them was scarcely perceptible.

He wore, as was usual for such intimate scenes, loose trousers tucked into half-boots of neat's leather, a coarse blue linen shirt open at his throat, and a summer waistcoat of flowered dimity. That was all he did have on and no effort of his family could improve upon it. The sleeves of the shirt were short on wrists that were now mere animated bundles of bones; his hands were large and twisted,

congregations of dry knots and ancient calluses. He ate his supper loudly and in a hurry, filling his mouth in the handiest and quickest manner available, and talking, criticizing the degenerate present, at the same time.

Jacob Winebiddle, at the head of the table, was neat, prosperous, and clearly German: his hair was so flaxen as to be almost white; his eyebrows made no mark on a broad good-tempered face. He wore a proper roundabout of nankeen, and the new long trousers of a decent cloth; his throat was confined by a carefully tied length of black gros de Naples. His wife, Recover, a thin woman with her father's scanty pale hair, was as admirable in green muslin and a tamboured petticoat. Her eyes, too, were blue, and small; her mouth was thin and firm; her hands awkward in appearance and swiftly capable. She occupied the end opposite Jacob. On her right sat Captain Mathias Stenles, who had married the eldest Winebiddle child, Union. The Captain had a large right to his title and showed it, although he was obviously poorly — the result of wounds and hardship incidental to a long service, in the Virginia Line, against King George. His eyes were grey and steady and his voice owned the deliberate inflections of his place of birth.

His wife was across the table from him, a woman already harassed at twenty-three, with their two elder children — Thomas Armit Stenles, aged four, and Minot, aged two — beside her. She was feeding them boiled Indian meal mush and at the same time sustaining her powers with whisky and water. Between Captain Stenles and old Thomas Armit sat Tench Armit, the son of Thomas, Recover Winebiddle's brother, with his wife,

an Indian squaw. She was a small round woman, with a round face the even color of red pottery and a rapid veiled black glance, dressed in a civilizing gingham. There was, however, woven into the smoothly laid blackness of her hair a vivid strand of scarlet worsted. Tench was silent. He kept a lowered countenance and ate, generally, in the manner of his father. Thomas Armit repeated that, crowded like it was, Pittsburgh couldn't be a healthy place. With more than a thousand —

"To be exact," Jacob Winebiddle told them, "it has fifteen hundred and sixty-five inhabitants." He liked exact statements and made them with an air of great finality and satisfaction. "It ain't only the people," Thomas Armit went on; "it's the smoke. The air's getting so a person can hardly breathe it. Not to do him any good. Why, God sakes, look at what's going on, and all in a musket shot — iron-shops and the glass-house and a distillery and a brewery, tanneries and boat yards and brick-furnaces. It's no better than living in a smudge." He refreshed himself with a draught of whisky innocent of water, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. "When I come to Pittsburgh in the summer of Fifty-eight," he asserted, "it wasn't nothing like this. The soldiers were just building the little fort and there was some trading-cabins in the Bottom. Nothing better than bark." Union Stenles said fretfully:

"Now, Grampap, take some more of the stew beef."

He didn't want any more of the beef. "You want to fill my mouth up so I'll be quiet," he told her. "I can't see that filling your mouth up keeps you quiet," his daughter Recover observed. "There was nothing but

the Fort and the traders in the Bottom," Thomas Armit persisted. "We had a hell of it, too. The French and Indians like to skeered us to death. They were gathering thick at Venango, but nothing come of it. They marched north to Niagry. What was I saying, Recover? Oh, yes — about the soldiers and building Fort Pitt. That run into Fifty-nine. Colonel Mercer and two hundred soldiers from Virginia. You wouldn't think anybody remembered so good, and most wouldn't. I took a dislike to Virginians right there."

"You might remember that Mathias, married to your own granddaughter, is from Virginia," Recover Winebiddle told him. "What's that to do with it?" Thomas asked sharply. "Nothing that I can see. In particular when you remember what fetched Mathias here. Come with Colonel Morgan to force the Excise. What happened to me? Why, just what you say — he joined in with my family! I wouldn't favor anybody who was from Virginia, not after the way Lord Dunmore went on. Wanted everything in the West for himself. Even to naming Pittsburgh Fort Dunmore." Mathias Stenles asked reasonably: "Mr. Armit, wasn't it a good thing Virginia sent Captain Neville to hold Fort Pitt? I understood there was danger of the British from Detroit taking it. It was the general opinion that Dr. Connolly was not loyal."

"Who sent him?" the old man demanded triumphantly. "Lord Dunmore is who. The British wouldn't have taken Fort Pitt neither. If they had they couldn't have helt it. The traders would have picked them off one by one out of the woods. You want to remember that Henry Cague and John Davage and Collip Gaw were living

then. What happened to Braddock wouldn't have been nothing." He took a deep drink of whisky. Tench Armit's Indian wife refilled her father-in-law's glass. "Patrick McGarr and James Savacool and Ratigan," he continued. "Any one of them could hit a redcoat as far as they could a redskin. I'll step out today and turkey shoot the whole thousand and worse in Pittsburgh. If I don't bring home the turkey I'll eat boiled mush like little Minot the rest of my life. I'd almost as lieve as this stew beef all fixed up like you have it. The way you spoil a quarter of venison and call it a pot pie is a caution. When have you set a good piece of bear meat on the table? Not in ten moons is when."

"Now, father," Jacob Winebiddle protested, "Union has as nice food as you'd get in Philadelphia. You got to remember Pittsburgh is civilized and don't live on bears any more." Thomas Armit repeated the word civilized with an excited bitterness. "It's reached hell and gone," he declared. "It might be all right for a Dutchman. First I get a Dutchman for a son, and then Union marries a man from Virginia, and my own son Tench legally takes a squaw. I don't warm to the Dutch and I'm opposed to Virginians on principle, but I hate an Indian. I've killed and lifted the hair of a hundred, but now I set up to the table with one. I got a squaw for a legal daughter. In my day with the bounty," he said, "Tench could have drawed fifty dollars good money for her skelp."

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Jacob Winebiddle owned a double log house with two stories and a garret; the logs were squared on the inside,

the mortar in the chinks smooth, and Jacob had covered the walls of the main room with paper. He was a very progressive man. A great fireplace, too, was covered; a cannon stove for the local stone coal had its pipe let in the chimney; the cooking had been removed to a new added kitchen at the rear. The main room occupied half of the ground floor; there was no door through the dividing wall, communication with the other lower chamber — Jacob and Recover's bedroom — went by way of the exterior steps. Thomas Armit had been opposed to so much change: in the first place, with the cooking at such a distance the victuals were bound to get cold before they reached the table; then it was known that stone coal poisoned the air; and finally paper hung on the walls gave a person the lung fever.

He sat now, at the end of supper, gazing disparagingly at the supposed improvements about him. Thomas Armit Stenles was crying vigorously. "It ain't so much I mind him scaring the child," Recover explained, "as I do him telling all those stories about scalps and bloody acts with Union in the condition she's in. I don't mind little Thomas, but I don't want her to take a fright." Thomas Armit stirred uneasily. "I didn't say nothing," he protested. "God sakes, I don't know what women and children are coming to. It's a good thing Union didn't travel out to Pittsburgh in Fifty-eight. I couldn't cross the River at Lancaster account of the ice. Wright's ferry was froze. I waited twenty days and then had to take the goods over on a sleigh. Lost a kag of lead too. At York I had to open up the parcels and scour the rust off the knives. Then John Mushet had twenty Virginia soldiers

living in his kitchen. He didn't have nothing anyways but a blockhouse considerable smaller than this cabin."

Lizzie Armit, Tench's wife, skillfully packed her father-in-law's pipe; she gave it to him ceremoniously, and brought a coal in a miniature pair of iron tongs from the stove. Thomas Armit accepted all this with an impressive show of patience. The Indian woman, the family knew, venerated the old man; she obeyed her husband, but she prostrated herself before Thomas Armit. He had a complete right, she made it plain, to regard her as the earth beneath his feet. That was the Indian in her. "When I got to Fort Henry," Thomas continued, "the ford there was just as bad. It was all broke up by Sir John St. Clair's coach." Union, with little Minot, had joined her mother and Lizzie Armit in the kitchen; only the masculine element of the Armit connection remained to listen to old Thomas's account of early hardship.

"There was considerable of a defense at Fort Frederick," he went on; "high stone walls. The gate faced the King's storehouse. I led the wagons inside, but a sergeant acted awful bad through the unloading. He hit a man I had, name of Vulgamor, on the mouth and I took into him. I was awful bad myself in them days." Thomas Armit broke into laughter thin like a giggle. "I like to bit his ear off," he admitted. "That would have been nothing if I could have put a thumb in his eye. He was a pretty good sergeant. Lieutenant Riley said he would have let me kill him. Lieutenant Riley died himself while I was there. Took the flux. There was a parcel of soldiers died of the flux in the West country."

"Mercy, Grampap!" Union had come into the room;

"are you still telling of old times? I've heard that trip in Fifty-eight so often I know it better than you. You've reached the part where you had such a hard time getting wagons and had to cut the ice out of the Potomac." He rigidly ignored this. "After I traveled over most of Virginia for wagons, all the creeks were up," he went on. "I lost my hatchet and bought a tomahawk. We loaded by candlelight in the Fort." Thomas Armit sighed deeply. "The snow on Sidling Hill was as high as this table. I slept in a hollow stump on the mountain. Laid her comfortable with bark and built a great fire. The next day I got to Cressop's and the day beyond Cumberland.

"Fort Cumberland, you might say, was like Pittsburgh now. With giddy women. Anyways, I was declared Packhorse Master there. I was paid five pounds a month Pennsylvania money, but more west of Kittatinny Hill. Account of the Indians. I had thirty-four horses, and it was March, in the Swan ponds pasture." Union interrupted him again. "There is one good thing, he's almost to Pittsburgh." Captain Stenles said: "Union, don't interfere with your grandfather." She stood with her hands on her hips, squarely bearing the weight of her unborn child. "Interfere with him," she echoed her husband; "I'd thank you to know who could stop his stories and going on. It ain't human to listen to them as much as I have." Her voice grew shrill with fretfulness. "Who wants to hear about them days anyhow? With nothing but killings and mountains and fords. I'm sick of taking the horrors from him." Recover Winebiddle hurried into the room. "It's just too bad," she declared; "I can't leave a minute but Grampap goes off on his recollections."

It wasn't as bad as she thought, Jacob said pacifically. "Old men have to talk. After all, if Mr. Armit hadn't come to Pittsburgh where would Captain Stenles and me been? That is a question." Thomas Armit was confused.

"What did I tell that give Union the horrors?" he demanded. "It was only about my trip in Fifty-eight. Suppose I had went on about what happened to the twelve British soldiers James Smith seen brought into Fort Duquesne after the French and Indians licked General Braddock. Their faces painted black and burned to a coal. And that wasn't all to it neither, with the soldiers screeching and stuck full of fat pine splinters —"

He was interrupted by the replica of a screech, a choked cry, from Union. She collapsed in a chair with her head and arms on the table. "Maybe you had better go out for a little," Jacob Winebiddle advised Thomas Armit. "Union is shook up quite considerable." Thomas Armit was confounded. What the women were made of now he couldn't think. "I believe I'll take a walk," he observed. "It's not what I'd call safe in Pittsburgh, the drays are that thick it's worth a person's life to cross the street, but I'll risk her."

He made his way supported by a thick stick of white ash from Second Street, where the Winebiddle house stood, over Chancery Lane to Third. The spring dusk was gathering; the glow had faded from the veil of smoke drawn between the rivers. Thomas Armit proceeded by way of Hay Street, across Penn, to what was left of the orchard and gardens on the Allegheny River. The apple and pear trees, like himself, were old and gnarled: they

had been planted, the gardens laid out, before even he had come to Pittsburgh. The King's Artillery Gardens they had been called then. Once a row of traders' houses had stood on that bank, under the protection of the Fort, but only two or three remained into his time. Until Fifty-eight. The Fort had been a fort in those days, with the embankment crossing the land faced with brick, and the officers, in summer, playing hand-ball in the dry ditch. Now there was only part of the ditch and some old ramparts left; a little of the brick barracks and the magazine. In a moment, he thought, he must hear the sunset gun. After that, trading with the Indians was done for the day; Pittsburgh closed, guarded, against darkness and death.

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THERE was, he recalled, a pleasant resting-place against a lower grassy bank, and he went carefully down toward the water. Thomas Armit settled himself with a feeling of comfort and great relief, and a splendid idea possessed him — he would sleep there for the night. He didn't like his room at Jacob Winebiddle's; it was too small; a body couldn't rightly take his breath in it. Here, within the sound of the Allegheny River, he rested in a familiar relief. The night deepened, his thoughts and sensations swam one into the other . . . the Allegheny was swift and clear, it poured clear and swift from the north; but the Monongahela, from the south, was dark and slow. There were, it seemed to Thomas Armit, Indian canoes on the river, eight canoes of Mohawk warriors; they passed the fort with lifted painted paddles, chanting and

shooting off their guns. The Six Nations, the Mingoes, were not friendly — two Highlanders had been killed at their post outside the Fort. There was a war between the Senecas and the Cherokees, and fifty Senecas were crowded into the town. The Indians stole everything they could reach and move, and at dark he put them with their squaws out of his trading-house. As as result they threw stones at his door all night.

A great council was held; that was July; Croghan, the Indian Commissioner, and Andrew Montour spoke. Montour made the Indians laugh, they slapped their copper sides and laughed until they cried. Mingoes and the Delawares. Beaver delivered a single strand of wampum and two women prisoners. Afterwards an ox was roasted and the Indians got drunk.

A faint dry smile contracted his face in the darkness — it was forbidden to give the Indians whisky, but all the traders did it. He did, certainly; James Savacool had and Patrick McGarr; why, Collip Gaw kept a kettle of punch on his counter. You couldn't best an Indian unless he had been drinking. Thomas Armit's thoughts moved to Tench, his son. Tench was a great disappointment to him. He had been sent, originally, in the interest of Armit and Winebiddle to trade in the Indian villages, Shawan's town down the River and among the Tawas along Beaver Creek; but, God sakes, Tench had turned into an Indian. There was a sound of slow footsteps on the bank above, and Thomas Armit rose with a blurred resentment. It changed into chagrin — Jacob Winebiddle stood beside him. He said in his reasonable manner:

"Come, Mr. Armit. It's getting late."

Thomas Armit didn't care how late it was. "I'm going to stop here," he announced. "I'll sleep in a coffin soon enough." He knew, Jacob proceeded, that Recover didn't like him to stay out. "It looks as if we didn't treat you right. People would talk. The day is past, Mr. Armit, when you can sleep on the grass in Pittsburgh. I guess we can wait a little, it's so nice on the River." He lowered himself to a place by Thomas Armit's side. "In Fifty-eight," Thomas explained, "it weren't safe. I was just recollecting, Jacob, how it was when I first took to trading. Most of the houses went up along the Monongahela, but the traders — Ratigan and Collip Gaw and John Davage and Henry Cague — liked it better here on the Allegheny. My house was just a piece up the bank. That's where I first saw Recover's mother.

"Wingenum had her — saved her out of a cabin on the Big Youghogany — and he brought her with him when he was trading five white deerskins. She was a thin pale little thing, but I took a fancy for her. She were around fifteen years then. Wingenum didn't want to sell her. Worth fifty pounds he said. I got her for thirty and a half a kag of whisky. Orey." He fell silent. "That was a good day for me, Jacob," he said finally. "For me, too," Jacob Winebiddle agreed. "I remember Mrs. Armit. She died the year I came into your store. It got to be Armit and Winebiddle pretty quick." Thomas Armit answered: "And now it's Winebiddle and Stenles. That's how things go. Edged out of my own store. Couldn't keep up with the times. Well, so much the worse for them. When I was trading, a man could do wonderful well. You could wagon a hundredweight of skins to Cumberland for

under twenty-seven shilling. Corkingdal's Fort to Philadelphia. The Indians grew pretty slick though. I mind Collip's steelyard was a shade light and Shingas brought his beaver to me. Two and a half pounds of powder for a skin."

"You must see that things are different," Jacob Winebiddle pointed out. "Take window glass: the time was when it all came over the mountains, with a good lot broke, and a piece six by eight was as big as we sold. Now with the glass-house at New Geneva and O'Hara and Craig opening a manufactory just over the Monongahela, window glass is eighteen by twenty-four inches. A foot and a half by two. It's the same with everything. We were lucky to have Captain Stenles joined to us. He's a gentleman all of Pittsburgh takes notice of. That is the part that ain't heated the wrong way about politics."

"They are all heated the wrong way about politics," Thomas Armit declared; "Captain Stenles as well as the Republicans. What's the Republicans but French?" he demanded. "If they knew the French the way I did, saw them in Fifty-eight, there wouldn't be no such a party. The burning and killing buggers! I wish Judge McKean and Henry Brackenridge had been in Pittsburgh when we had to slaughter the milk cows for food. No help for a matter of three hundred mile. We pulled down all the houses and moved our bundles of skins into the Fort. Yes sir, it would have done them politicians good to lay in the Fort with the fire arrows coming thick from the River. We were mortal glad to see Colonel Bouquet in October and smoke the peace pipe. It had an eagle feather

tied to it. The Indians thought a lot of eagles — they brought up a wind with a wing and laid the tail feathers away wrapped in beaver skin.

"But that was Pontiac's war and mostly after the French. It all runs together like. Mind you, the Federalists ain't better. Sending troops here to force the Excise. Calling soldiers out against free Americans. It ain't legal. What we want is an American party. I'm in favor of western Pennsylvania breaking off with the East. You noticed what Mathias Stenles said at supper about Captain Neville and his men. We near to broke off too if Mr. Jackson's plans had succeeded." Jacob Winebiddle was as near to being impatient as his temperament allowed. "That would be suicide," he asserted. "We need the East and East needs us. We're one. America. I kind of wish, Mr. Armit, that Captain Stenles wasn't out for prothonotary. It looks like a nasty campaign now there is a Republican paper. Remember Captain Stenles is a military gentleman, and if they come out too strong about him there can't but be trouble. You have to think that he's poorly. I misdoubt if he could hold a pistol right and steady."

"Don't you be afraid, Jacob," Thomas Armit reassured him. "The Republicans won't forget me. They'll take a long breath before they will bother in my family. I'd as soon shoot one as I would a Frenchman or a Tawa." Jacob Winebiddle rose. "We must go home," he said. "Recover gets sharp when she's worried." God sakes, Thomas Armit replied, what was the world coming to when it was run by women. He was excited by the prospect of trouble with the local Republicans. If they printed anything in

The Tree of Liberty unfavorable to Mathias Stenles, who had married his granddaughter, they would find the times hadn't changed so much after all. Jacob assisted him up the bank.

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It was Thomas Armit's idea, since the entire family were gathered to proceed to Grant's Hill for supper, that the facts about that elevated place of resort ought to hold a renewed interest. His daughter, Recover, was brief with him. "This is no time for long-winded stories about what maybe happened," she informed the old man. Recover was not unsupported by reason: Thomas Armit Stenles, Minot Stenles, and Nicholas, the baby, were in the process of being packed about their mother into a two-wheeled country cart; Captain Stenles, it was clear, was even more poorly than customary; and Jacob Winebiddle was issuing a series of exact instructions for everyone. "I will lead the horse," he proceeded; "Thomas Armit Stenles will hold Nicholas, and Union take charge of the basket." Thomas Armit made a scrawl on the earth before the Winebiddle house. He said: "Captain McDonald was here, down on the Hill, when the French and Indians come on him. He was swept away account of the Highlanders being new to Western fighting. The Highlanders didn't look for no cover and they were shot down. The Carolina companies and Marylanders were all behind trees, the same as the Indians, but they had to draw back. Major Lewis, he come up, but it didn't do no good either. It was like this;" he indicated his plan of the affair. "Those

Highlanders marched out on the Hill and playing of their bagpipes. Fighting against French and Indians! In Pennsylvania."

"Now, Grampap," Jacob Winebiddle told him, "you can march along yourself." He was, Thomas Armit admitted, winded. They had arrived at John Marie's tavern, set above Pittsburgh. There was a pattern of gravel walks and orderly bushes, a spring set in a green bower, and reaches of grass. At the back rose the forest; below, the city was spread out between its rivers in a transparent evening light. From the level beside Marie's house of entertainment came the short accents of military commands: the Pittsburgh Light Dragoons were drilling in preparation for the spring maneuvers. Not, Thomas Armit reflected, that there was much in that or in them. A poor sort of soldiers. Mostly uniform. It wasn't that he minded James Brison, their captain, so much, for all his airs — might as well be a dancing-master — as he was completely sceptical about General Fowler, commander of the Allegheny County Brigade. General Fowler was a Republican and opposed to Mathias Stenles. Broken memories of the commanders, the notable soldiers, Thomas had seen at Pittsburgh floated through his mind:

He had missed Washington, but counted that no notable loss; he would far rather have seen General Forbes, mortally sick in the litter in which he had been carried over all the mountains between Philadelphia and the West. He recollected Colonel Mercer, though, like Forbes out of Scotland. Mercer had been killed in action soon afterwards . . . at Princeton. General Stanwix had been at Fort Pitt the winter of — of Fifty-nine. Yes, in Fifty-nine he had

improved the fortifications. He run the ditch clear down to the Allegheny River where Marbury Street now hit it. Near to where the Butlers had their houses. Colonel Grant did some building there, but that was later. Thomas Armit recollected like it was that morning the day General Stanwix put out for Philadelphia with thirty-five Ohio chiefs. Early in the year. He left a major with a funny name, a name like Tulips, in command. Then Colonel Bouquet marched against Presqu' Isle. Monckton had a big treaty with the Six Nations. That would be about Sixty. It was Thomas Armit's opinion that some Delawares and Shawanese had been present as well.

"Supper's ready, Grampap," Jacob called. He didn't want no supper. "Give Grampap a little whisky," Recover directed. "Coming up the Hill was pretty bad on him." He didn't want whisky either, Thomas Armit persisted stubbornly. All he asked was to be let alone. He tried, in the failing light, to distinguish familiar houses and places in the city spread below him. Mostly he couldn't. It was so crowded. Why, there were streets clean out to the Hill. However, he made out Market Street. A ninny could see where Market Street was with its pile of stores. And brick, too. There was nigh as many brick now as log. Come from tearing down the Fort, the brick did. A kind of a pale brick you might almost call white.

He could see about, but not exactly, where his store stood, on Market Street at Third. Thomas Armit secretly regarded it as his store although he had been edged out. Near by was the Sign of General Butler with James Hilliard's farrier shop in the tavern stable. Further to the right was the Diamond and the new market house. He

could just distinguish the pond where they shot ducks on the Allegheny side of the point. His thoughts returned to Colonel Bouquet and how he licked the Indians. The Indians had treated for peace by the mouth of the Big Beaver. The Senecas and Delawares had give up two hundred and more prisoners. There was a Captain Murry somewhere along then and a gospel preacher preaching outside the Fort. Lord Dunmore was in Pittsburgh on his way against the Ohio Nation. He became conscious that the Light Dragoons had ended their drill, the band was playing a right good piece. Name of some battle or other. But, immediately after, he recognized Jefferson's March.

The light had all but gone and there were lanterns shining in the grove about John Marie's. Soon, Thomas Armit recognized, they would descend to the city. Return home. The family, he found, gathered in an irregular circle on the grass, was quiet and solemn. Jacob addressed Captain Stenles. "You got to go easy in a political situation," he said. "It's different from the army. I don't doubt but a man ought to forget about being a military gentleman." Mathias Stenles replied that there were some things no man could overlook. "I am not quarrelsome," he went on. "General Fowler was deliberately contemptuous." Thomas Armit interrupted them. "General Fowler!" he exclaimed impatiently; "he's no shadow of a general. You can't be a general through writing pieces in the paper. General McIntosh was a general. Colonel Brodhead was one too. Took his men right up to the villages on Broken Straw Creek and burned five hundred acres of planting and two hundred houses more or less. Them was times an Indian was understood. Killed them all, the Mo-

ravian Indians and prisoners and squaws." A complete silence answered him. Jacob Winebiddle proceeded:

"Tarleton Bates was in the store only this morning and he said they were all minded to stay clear of Clapboard Row. He didn't see it was necessary to read The Tree of Liberty at all. He said that the record of Captain Stenles was open to all and any. The Federalist party, he said, had brought America into being and it didn't have to defend its honor with a lot of filthy political sutlers. He said he wouldn't permit any shady bastard of a Republican to upset his serene consciousness of right. We ought to be picking up," he added. He made a gesture toward the sleeping children, the women, and Thomas Armit. Thomas was annoyed by Jacob Winebiddle's habit of conducting political discussions without reference to himself, a man who knew Pittsburgh and the politics of Pittsburgh from the beginning.

"As I was sitting here," Captain Stenles informed them, "I counted a hundred flatboats and keel boats tied along the Monongahela waiting for water to get down the River. There was as many more on the Allegheny bank. Six people to a boat would make twelve hundred. There are a lot of people moving west by Pittsburgh. It's a metropolis." Jacob Winebiddle, with a lighted lantern, captured their grazing horse.

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Back again in his room in the Winebiddle house Thomas Armit was too tired for proper sleep. Anyhow his room was hot, there couldn't no air come in at the only little window

it had — he misdoubted if it were eight inches by ten — and he never had laid right on the bed. It was a good enough bed, a strong pine frame with woven rope and a bag of goose feathers, but it didn't seem to suit him. He would have done better with a couple of bearskins in a corner. Why, coming west in Fifty-eight, he had slept elegant in a great stump. Nothing but some bark under him. Beyond Sidling Hill. He had often slept on the counter of his trading-room. The look of that interior returned to him vividly — the house in the bottom with the main room below and two rooms above. One was the store-room for furs; in the other — at intervals — he slept. Below, the counter crossed the floor near to one end, and behind it were his shelves of bright calicoes and French blankets, the tinware and bullet lead, the powder kegs and whisky of trading. At the other end of the room was the chimney fireplace and a long, comfortable settle. Patrick McGarr and James Savacool, Collip and Henry Cague, all the notable traders, had been familiar to it. Collip Gaw mostly had a little spannel dog sitting in his lap. He, Thomas Armit, had a pet raccoon chained to the counter and a raven hopping around with clipped wings. The Indians, if he failed to watch them, kicked the raccoon about some, but they wouldn't lay finger on the raven. They said it was a spirit.

Well, if that was so, it was the spirit of a Crow Indian — of all the thieving birds his raven was worst and everyone knew a Crow Indian would steal the fleas off a dog. Thomas could plainly hear the sharp tap of the bird's strong beak picking up grains of parched corn from the floor. He couldn't remember what had happened to the

raccoon. Collip's spannel had been killed with a knife in the King's Artillery Gardens. By, probably, an Indian with a spite. Anyways, Collip had went up the Monongahela and shot two Indians he knew. They could tend the spannel in the spirit hunting-ground, he explained.

Yes, they had sat along his bench, the fireplace loud and bright with burning logs. Indians had shared his comfort and warmth: Thomas Armit recollected Killbuck, who had sent a threatening message to old Colonel Cressep. The Colonel had sent back word for Killbuck to come out with his rifle, but the Indian went up into the woods. Clean skeered. He saw again James Morris, a short dark Indian painted black and too smart with his tongue. But Beaver was a quiet middle-aged man, Delaware George, too, was decent behaved . . . when you watched him. A name came back to him — Heecaise. King Netotwhelmy. They passed through his memory silent in the moccasins of death.

There were Indians everywhere — in the trading-houses, under the walls of the Fort, on the rivers, and shouting for a passage from the far banks. They made the forest and the roads and the night perilous, and then, suddenly, they were gone. Only a few without anything to them remained in the clearings about Pittsburgh. They brought in a little game and lay drunk under the trees. The Indians were gone and the beaver were gone, otter no longer fished on the streams, even deer and turkey-cocks were disappearing. The traders, except for himself, were all dead or vanished. Some had died of the flux and some had dropped lonely with an arrow in the back. Patrick McGarr had been killed by a drunken soldier in a company

of the Royal Irish. John Davage had took the French disease from a woman at Fort Cumberland and, searing himself with gunpowder, he had died of the burns.

Collip Gaw, one day, paddling a bundle of skins down to Andrew Buyerly's at Brushey Run, had vanished out of his canoe. The canoe was found resting in a cove, its contents were whole, there were no signs of foot-marks on the bank. The Indians had their theories of it. It was curious about Indians; they knew curious things. Take a white woman some Mingoes had killed and buried—her hand and arm come right up out of the ground. They buried her again twicet as deep, and up her arm rose again. It didn't do no good to hack it off. Thomas Armit was convinced of the truth of this. Then the Nanticock tribe had an infernal child born in it. That child killed all the other children in the village and it couldn't be killed. Fifty tomahawks was sunk in it and it kept right on. When it did die the Nanticocks made a poison out of the body and murdered off all their enemies.

God sakes, why couldn't he get to sleep? His mind was as full of the devil's doings as Braddock's Field was thick with soldiers' bones. Well, he had some age on him, and he guessed the aged rested uneasy. With all that had happened to them. His life had been harder than most; he was experienced in pretty near everything; and you might think the family would listen to him, but it wouldn't. They kept talking about the times being different. In one way they were but in another they weren't. Human nature was the same. The trouble was that now people were packed so close together you couldn't tell one from another. Like skins in a bundle. If they didn't open them up

better they would get rotten. Oncet he had had to throw away a whole parcel of bear pelts. Rotten. Too late to worm them. If they didn't mind, it would soon be too late to worm Pittsburgh. Swans and ice in the river. A flood in the Allegheny with the water against the shutters of his house. He had rowed an officer into the Fort.

It was after that the grasshoppers had eat his four hundred cabbage plants. Pestiferous insects. Orey, his wife, had put them out. It was a lucky day when Wingenum had brought her along with him. Living with the Indians, though, had changed her. Or maybe seeing her family killed had made her a little strange. She remembered her mother's hair, her mother's scalp, black and bleeding. You could hardly get a word out of her. A marvelous woman for work. The Indians had learned her that. There was no talking back in a female with the Indians. They would hit her alongside of the head with the flat of a tomahawk. Or maybe with the edge. They were just as like to. He, Thomas Armit, had beaten Orey good oncet. He was ashamed of it now, she had been so spindling, and he shifted restlessly on the hardness of his bed.

There wasn't enough flesh to him, he concluded. He were nothing but bones. However, he had never been a heavy man. Thin and active. Quick. You had to be quick if you were a Pack-horse Master. You had to be quick anyhow in Fifty-eight. He minded the time he had killed seventy-two rattlesnakes at Ligonier. In three piles they were, just outside the Captain's garden. There had been thunder and lightning steady for a month and wolves had appeared with no hair to their legs or belly. The worst wolves a person ever see. They dragged down horses

meadowed at Shirtee's. When was it General Wayne had camped at Log's town? He had neglected General Wayne remembering back on Grant's Hill. His thoughts were alternately bright and blurred; sleep touched him and retreated and returned. Thomas Armit saw the justices of the Supreme Court proceeding through Pittsburgh to their legal duties in solemn black with cocked hats; the sheriff walked ahead with the white wand of office; a drummer followed them vigorously drumming.

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Thomas Armit took his place at the table, late for dinner. He spoke out of a sense of injury, asking how a person up in his boxlike room could be supposed to know what was happening downstairs. "If I might have took a fair sight at the sun I would have knowed," he explained. "There was nobody could fool me about the time in the woods. John Davage, in his day, read the hour in the stars." Jacob Winebiddle and his wife, Recover, were at the table, together with Tench Armit and Lizzie, and they were more than usually grave. They paid no attention to the old man. Jacob said: "It's no use to advise Captain Stenles. Certain things have to follow their own paths to the end, right or wrong, and his mind made up is one of them. You must remember the Captain is a military gentleman and a Virginian. He is different from us. He has high ideas about honor. They wouldn't be mine, because they are not sensible, but they are his. You can't exactly blame him — it's what he was born and how he was brought up. The army added to it. Captain Stenles is what you'd call afraid of nothing."

It made her sick, Recover exclaimed, talking about Mathias this and that and what he wasn't afraid of. How about Union in her condition? Didn't nobody give her a thought? What if there were pieces about Mathias they didn't like in the paper? That didn't hurt him. It wasn't like sticks and stones to break his bones. She was tired to death of the sight of a man and specially tired of hearing them gabble about the past and their honor. Their honor! Vainglory was the right word. Jacob patiently explained again that there were of necessity sides to Captain Stenles they did not understand. "If John Israel keeps putting things like the last in The Tree of Liberty the Captain will demand a duel." All the men he saw down Market Street agreed to that. "A duel!" Thomas Armit exclaimed; "there's nothing but rubbish to a duel.

"What's it for, I'd like to ask. Why, one man looks to kill another. And if he does it's sensible to kill him. In Fifty-eight if you let all the men shoot at you you needed to kill, you'd have been blowed full of daylight in a week. Shoot them from behind a tree if they are fool enough to forget themselves. Trail them. I mind oncet Collip Gaw waited upward of six months to clean off a slate. The man was a kin of Croghan's, the Indian Commissioner, and Collip had to go careful. He put a knife in him trading up in the Wyandotte country. If John Israel bothered me I'd just let a bullet into him the first quiet chance." No one, he saw, was listening to him, and he grew angry. "You could tell a man was from Virginia by his talking about duels. Stand up and let a man who had wronged you have a fair shot! James Savacool and the rest would have died laughing."

Jacob Winebiddle simply reiterated that Mr. Armit didn't understand the Captain. As he was talking Union came hurriedly into the room with a paper in her hand. Her face was at once pallid and dark with shadow. "Now he's done it," she declared shrilly. "Mr. Israel has done it and Mathias will be killed." Recover curtly told her to sit down and ease herself. Jacob Winebiddle took The Tree of Liberty from Union's fingers; his gaze searched the sheet until it was held fixed. When he was finished reading he put the paper down. He asked Union: "When did Captain Stenles expect to be back from Cincinnati?" The first of next week, she replied. The packet-boat was supposed to arrive Monday. Jacob was thoughtful. "Well," Recover said in a sharp voice, "you might let someone else know a little of what it is." He silently gave her the paper.

"I must see Tarleton Bates and some of the other gentleman," Jacob Winebiddle proceeded. "But it won't do any good. Not when the Captain reads this. He's too weakly to have gone into politics. With the spirit he's got. He ought to just stayed a private citizen in the store." Union Stenles began to cry. Her mother's face was harsh. "You have to fret but it won't do any good," she told Union. "Men are fools and they have to go on being fools. What I want you to remember is keep up outside the family. Don't you let nobody else see a tear. No matter what happens. You can do so much and go so far and then it's over."

"Wait till I speak to Mathias Stenles," Thomas Armit informed his granddaughter. "I'll make him see sense. Duels may be all well and good in Virginia, but this ain't Virginia. It's Pennsylvania. He's married in my family."

Lizzie Armit spoke unexpectedly. "A warrior must meet his fate," she said. She showed an instant frightened silence at her temerity. Her swift black eyes glanced once at the old man. Tench nodded. "Lizzie is right and Recover is right," he agreed with them. "You needn't take no doubt about Union. When it comes to it." Thomas Armit blustered thinly at his son. "What I want to know is who asked you to talk? Since when have squaws spoken at a council? That's what I want to know. It's a disgrace enough to have you like you are, no better than a Crow, and for me to have to set up to the table with an Indian."

"I only said Lizzie was right and I'll say it again," Tench persisted. "You've called me an Indian so much I don't even hear it. There's this about an Indian though — he knows his fate when it's on him. Even a Crow will die without a whole lot of talk." Thomas Armit demanded excitedly: "Who's talking? I've seen death more'n a hundred times and met it in the face. All I said was you got to be sensible with it. Things are getting bad when you are put to rights by a man too slack to trade a beaver skin and by a squaw." Jacob Winebiddle interrupted them. "Don't let's have a fight here. It's bad enough as it is. We are just making it harder for Union." Thomas Armit relapsed into a sulking silence. No one would listen to him or understand life right. The troubles of the present all came from fancy notions without reason to them. It was what Union got for marrying a Virginian. He had been against it all along. Thomas Armit guessed that some day they would learn he was right. Lizzie packed and handed him his pipe. She brought a coal from the stove. Then she replenished the whisky in his glass. Through this he

maintained an absolute immobility of expression; he showed no trace of a consciousness of her existence.

"You come over and lie down," Recover told Union Stenles. She led her out the door, toward the other part of the house. Tench Armit read what John Israel had printed about Mathias Stenles. "That is his fate," he said at the end. "I'd laugh at it but it's a matter of death with the Captain. Taking what he is." Thomas Armit took a drink. The world, Pittsburgh, was getting to be too noisy. Too many people talked. He longed for the days of Collip Gaw, the days when he was young. There was no newspapers then to bother a man; why, in his time there wasn't even a preacher. Not regular. If you had a falling out then, you settled it yourself. The smartest man, the quickest, lived. Now, it seemed, nobody watched his own business. Everything, and principally politics, was so mixed there wasn't no head nor hide to it. If western Pennsylvania had drawed off to itself, none of the present misfortunes would have fallen. Pittsburgh would have stayed like it was, a place fitten to live in. It could have been easy managed with no trading after the sunset gun and the Indians regulated. What, instead of that, had happened? — the Indians had all been drove away. The only exchange was bank money. A country where a white deerskin wouldn't fetch even a piece of bacon over the counter couldn't expect to thrive. Why, God sakes, there wasn't no white deer left to skin! A Dutchman and a Virginian, a lot of women, thought to run his, Thomas Armit's, affairs.

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With a touch of malice and indicating the newspaper, Tench said to his father: "I notice John Israel didn't overlook to make a mention of you." Him, Thomas Armit exclaimed; Israel wouldn't have no call to mention him! "I don't know anybody in a newspaper and I'm not a Federalist." Tench, in the face of Jacob Winebiddle's movement of disapproval, read: "We do not question the Captain's store of courage, but only bewail the end to which it is blusteringly applied. The Captain, we are assured, bears in his veins the best blood of Virginia; if this is indeed true we can only account for his present attitude by the assumption that he is most unfortunately reflecting the traits of the venerable nuisance attached, like the rotten limb of a tree, to the family of his admirable companion through life." Where, the old man demanded, did any of that mention him? "You," Tench pointed out, "are that special limb." Thomas Armit felt the blood swelling in his throat, his face was burning. "Why, damn that miserable type-printing skunk!" he cried; "I'll have his black life." Jacob begged him to keep cool. "You shouldn't have told your father that," he pointed out to Tench. "It might, at his age, do him an injury. Don't you take any notice of what The Tree of Liberty says, Mr. Armit," he continued earnestly. "Captain Stenles and I can tend to it."

"Venerable nuisance," Thomas Armit repeated; "rotten limb. God damn his Indian soul." He rose hastily, trembling, from the table. Jacob asked where he was going, what he intended to do, but the old man made no reply. He didn't even hear his son-in-law. He stumbled up the narrow stair to his room, and there took from a

corner an old long flintlock rifle. It was rusted, the hammer was so stiff he could scarcely move it, the stock was dried out and loose, but it would still shoot. "She'll still shoot," Thomas Armit told himself. He found, in a small pine chest, a powder-horn that still held a measure of powder; fumbling further his fingers encountered a bag of balls. He needed a piece of linen. The ramrod broke as he was working it out of its place under the rifle barrel.

The next thing was to get out of the house without Jacob Winebiddle's seeing or stopping him. Soon, Thomas knew, Jacob would have to return to the store. He waited a long while; an hour, he judged by the sun; and then, with the rifle, he went down as quietly as he could manage. Jacob Winebiddle was gone; he saw no one on the lower floor of the house. The printing-office of The Tree of Liberty, Thomas Armit knew, was a small frame building on Market Street across from Dr. Mowry's; there, probably, he would find John Israel. Several people spoke to him on the street. Someone said: "Well, Mr. Armit, are you going out for bear?" He didn't answer. No black skunk of a printer could put in a paper about him being a rotten limb and live to tell of it! He was mad clear through. Too mad to come up on him rightly the way Collip Gaw or Patrick McGarr would have. He'd show Pittsburgh what it meant to have lived through Fifty-eight, with the French and Indians raising the skelp holler in the woods. He wouldn't wait for no duel like a Virginian.

Thomas Armit reached the building which held The Tree of Liberty suddenly. The door on the street was open . . . he had a shaken view of a man seated on a high stool

before a case of type; there was the gleam and clacking of the press. John Israel was standing beyond. The uproar of the shot, within the narrow walls, stunned Thomas Armit. He dropped the rifle from weak hands. John Israel had him roughly by the shoulder. "What's this, you old fool?" he demanded. "What do you mean by firing off a piece in here? The next thing you will hurt somebody."

"Leave go of my shoulder," Thomas Armit directed him. "I don't want no ink on me. If I hadn't of loaded her in a hurry you wouldn't never be calling my family by this or that again. The ball come out of the barrel crooked." As they stood together in the doorway a small crowd quickly gathered. What was it all about? An excited voice explained:

John Israel had put a squib about old Mr. Armit in The Tree of Liberty, and Mr. Armit had like to killed him. Shot right at Israel with his flint-fire rifle. The same gun he used killing Indians back when Pittsburgh began. You couldn't fool with those old men, no matter how old they were. They came from a time when human rights were respected. A loud huzza for Mr. Armit was raised. It was told that single-handed he had slain most of the French inside Fort Duquesne. Mr. Armit had personally led General Braddock's column into the wilderness. If Braddock had listened to him, there wouldn't have been a massacre. Some put the number of Indians he had killed at five hundred and others as high as a thousand. He had been struck by tomahawks and arrows seventy times. He could walk a hundred miles a day. He had hunted from Macinaw to New Orleans and been to the Shining Mountains. He never forgave an injury. The only reason John Israel was

alive was because Mr. Armit's rifle missed fire a time or two.

Thomas Armit indistinctly saw familiar faces in the throng about him; he saw General John Woods and Judge Addison, Senator Ross and Major Craig and Gabriel Dubac, the Frenchman. They were Federalists, favorable to Captain Stenles, but there were Republicans as well — Dr. Scott and Thomas Baird and James McClurg. They had joined in the huzza. General Fowler stood shoulder to shoulder with Tarleton Bates. A storm of satirical queries assailed John Israel: hadn't he better close his printing office and leave Pittsburgh? How long, with Mr. Armit gunning for him, could he hope to live? Would he meet the old man in an encounter? Bates stepped forward. He raised his hand for silence.

"I have an announcement and a request to make to Mr. Israel," he proceeded. "Lately there have been in The Tree of Liberty certain unflattering references to Captain Mathias Stenles, at present running for prothonotary in this city. Captain Stenles deserves better even from his opponents. Captain Stenles fought for America, for us, for Pittsburgh, in the sanguinary war against England. He was wounded and suffered for the cause of liberty. Captain Stenles is a man of honor; he is now returning from Cincinnati; and when he does return he will demand personal satisfaction from Mr. Israel. Captain Stenles is a lion in spirit, but wasted in body, and a number of gentlemen have joined me here in the resolution to prevent him from engaging in a duel. Mr. Israel, if the present attacks on Captain Stenles continue in The Tree of Liberty we will insist on meeting them in a body. We will insist upon

Captain Stenles's not acting. I may add that some of your most distinguished political supporters are in agreement with me."

John Israel was amazed. He had nothing personally against Captain Mathias Stenles, a gentleman of the highest reputation. He had merely written in the interest of the party. Mr. Tarleton Bates well knew that political controversies often took on an appearance of bitterness which had no base in actuality. The Federalists could not possibly elect their candidates and he would be delighted to accord Captain Stenles the fullest expression of his opinion of him as an individual and a citizen. There was a fresh and louder huzza. James McClurg took the place of Tarleton Bates. He wanted, he said, to emphasize all that Mr. Bates had expressed. The Republican party honored the men who had had a part in the great struggle for America and freedom. Thomas Armit didn't hear him. He was dead.

III.

THREE

THE EARLY transparent evening that filled Pearl street sounded with the bells of the cows returning unattended from the Pastures. They came singly and slowly — the soft clash of the bells intermittent — and stopped in front of the stoeps where they belonged. The deliberate cows avoided the wide cobblestone street for the flat gutters, and rubbed their sides along the buttonwood trees planted by the narrow paved sidewalks. The buttonwoods were regular, orderly, in their perspective; but in front of each stoep stood a tree different in age and kind, it might be, from those close by. The tree in front of Claes Mey's house was a red oak, it was so old that it broke into the line of the sidewalk; and more than once the town Council had threatened to order it cut down. Claes Mey, however, usually occupied some position of local administrative weight, and he had been able to stop the execution of any such proposal.

The larger, and varied, trees had been mostly planted in far earlier days, to mark a birth in the house immediately concerned; they were a part of the family records and pride; and there was a grave question if the Council had any right over them. Back of the uniform line of the buttonwood trees the gables of the houses, except for the fact that they were mostly brick, were as various as the

commemorative oaks and elms; some of the gables were very high and steep, with stepped sides and dates in black bricks. When one was extremely old it had an ornamental iron bracket above a square-shuttered opening by which the bales of beaver and otter skins were hauled up from the street for storage. Those houses had rose-brick façades, although they were actually built of boards: but the newer dwellings were often stone and squarely faced on the street instead of showing their gable-ends.

The Mey house was old; it was old without having been built in the earliest days of the patroonship, and therefore it was large and comfortable. The date in the peak of the gable was Sixteen eighty-one. The stoep was wider than most; the entire family could sit with ease on the benches that defined it—Claes Mey and his wife Liedya, Arendt and Cattryna and Angenietje. Claes and Liedya on one side and their children facing them from the other. Myndert De Vos, who lived next door above, had a much smaller stoep—his house was older, too—but then with only his wife and himself his family was correspondingly small; they didn't need much room for sitting through the summer evenings.

The Mey cow had already arrived, she had been milked and put in her stall, and Cattryna, seated on the edge of the stoep, was having her supper, milk and buttered bread and a bowl of strawberries. She was ten years old, a sturdy child with a wide face and a dimple in her chin. Cattryna was mostly silent, but against this she had the quick grey eyes of her father. Claes himself was not a talkative man: he commonly sat through the evening drawing floods of smoke from the long clay stem of his pipe in a detached

and philosophical regard of the passers-by. When a question was directed at him by his family or a neighbor, he liked to answer with a single and enigmatic sentence. He had a disconcerting way of meeting the simplest and and most obvious facts with doubt; there was always the suspicion of a private and sceptical humor in his voice and eyes. Liedya, who resembled him superficially, in reality was as different as possible — she accepted life placidly and completely. She had opinions of her own — one was that Claes's attitude of mind often approached an ungodliness unbecoming to a deacon of the Old Dutch Church — but they were never in conflict with sensible and agreed standards of thought. The novelty of her husband's reflections and ideas, of his nonsensical fancies, moved her to a good-natured impatience. She said to Claes:

"It will be getting dark soon and Arendt ought to be back. Captain Wallem Yeats took him and Jacob Roseboom and Carel Hendrickse to see the soldiers' camp at the Pastures." Claes Mey, across the stoep from her, suggested that Arendt might have stayed to have supper with Lord Howe. "He is capable of it." Liedya didn't answer that. It was clearly absurd. "I'll be thankful," she continued, "when Lord Howe and General Abercrombie and their soldiers move away and the French are beaten. Then we'll have some peace I hope."

"I should think you'd miss the gay times," Claes said from behind a screen of tobacco smoke. She ignored that, too. "I don't really mind having Mr. Evell quartered in the house, at bottom he is a nice boy; and at the same time it upsets me. The red coat and all that gilt and his hair in a queue! I am afraid he will bring our children ideas of

worldliness. He comes up from the taverns smelling of rum and yesterday he was teaching Angenietje some dancing steps."

"Well," Claes replied pacifically, "Pieter will be home any time now. Then he will conduct Angenietje's dancing." Myndert De Vos called from his stoep. "I thought Pieter Krol was expected back from New York today." Liedya answered. "Goossen Krol told me he had left New York, but the wind was against him coming up the river. He's been gone nearly a month already." Aeltje De Vos joined in the conversation. For the Meys, she said, his return would be like the welcoming home of a son. However, Liedya didn't reply to this—when they were ready they would make their own announcement about Angenietje and Pieter Krol. "Where is Angenietje?" Mrs. De Vos persisted. "She is in the garden at the back," Liedya informed her. "She was going with Arendt, but I concluded she was better taking up the tulip bulbs."

Cattryna had finished her supper and she rose with her glass and bowl. "I want Cataline to take my bowl and my glass out to the kitchen," she announced. "You will have to carry them yourself," her mother told her. "She is helping Angenietje. And while we are talking about Cataline you must stop giving her orders. She isn't your servant." Cattryna turned to her father. "Why can't I have a servant like Angenietje?" she demanded. Just then, Claes Mey replied, he couldn't remember why she suffered from such a sad lack. There were too many negroes around now, Liedya said generally. "Eytie is always complaining about them." The conversation was broken into by the shrill gayety of fifes, a roll of drums, from Market Street;

there was a sharp grounding of muskets, and almost at once Thomas Evell was on the stoep.

"What do you think!" he cried, "Lord Howe has made us all cut off our queues and when we go into the woods we are to leave our coats behind." He was, as Liedya Mey had intimated, no more than a boy, a boy with clear scarlet cheeks and candid grey eyes in the King's scarlet and gilt. He was an ensign in Howe's Fifty-sixth Regiment. "We are going to leave our coats and fight the Indians in hunting-shirts. Instead of keeping the muskets as bright as possible the barrels are to be black." He sat on the end of a bench. "Isn't that extraordinary?" Claes said solemnly that it was. "We are leaving almost everything in camp," Evell went on; "Howe has made up his mind not to repeat Braddock's mistake. He has even taken the chairs and table out of his tent and sleeps in a bearskin. There is only a log to sit on. Next we'll be ordered to dress in feathers and paint and carry scalping-knives like the French." Evell rose. "Where is Angenietje?" he asked. "She is in the back garden," Liedya Mey said briefly. She gazed significantly, with tight lips, at her husband, but he blandly ignored her. When Thomas Evell had gone, Aeltje De Vos called over: "What news is there of the war?" Claes replied that Lord Howe had ordered the queues off all his men. He had determined, Claes said, to stop furnishing the French with handles for the scalps they took.

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THE back garden, largely shut in upon itself, was like a verdant room with a carpet of close emerald sod bound

and ornamented with formal rows and garlands of tulips. That was, it had been like that; the tulip petals were fallen, leaving bare brown spikes; Angenietje was digging up the bulbs in preparation for setting out, in the fall, a fresh importation of their brilliant colors. She was kneeling on her petticoat, with her crisp striped skirt turned back, and as she secured the bulbs, Cataline put them into one or another of a number of osier baskets. Claes Mey had given the slave to Angenietje on her third birthday—less than a year separated their ages—the two children, negro and white, had been baptized together, and Angenietje by turns treated Cataline with a friendly ease and an exact despotism. Angenietje was fifteen.

"Cataline," she declared, "you must listen to me more carefully. I am certain you put that bulb in the wrong basket. You know we are giving them to old Mrs. Machtelt and she asked mother to be very careful and keep the colors separate. If there is a yellow tulip in Mrs. Machtelt's purple border next year it will be your fault and I won't give you a new dress for Pinxter day." Cataline insisted that she had done exactly what she was told. "The yellow with the yellow and the purple with the purple." Her skin was as black as possible, her features honest negro features, and against a close white cap her face was too dense for any expression except the flash of her teeth. Angenietje wore a cap with starched wings on a band of white embroidery. Under it her hair lay smoothly on her brow but at the back it escaped in a heavy gold stream tied with a green ribbon. As she bent forward, its weight slipped from one shoulder to the other and fell on the ground.

"I am going to stop digging up tulips," she announced.

"My knees hurt." She stood up, settling her skirt about her ribbed stockings. She had a face broad like Cattryna's, only not so broad; it was delicately flushed; and her eyes were her mother's eyes, wide open and calm and brown. She saw Eytie on the kitchen steps and called: "Eytie, I'm not going to dig up any more tulips!" The servant firmly replied that she must finish the row she was engaged with. There were hardly any bulbs in the baskets. "But Eytie," Angenietje insisted, "you don't know how my knees hurt." She would soon get used to that, Eytie told her unfeelingly. The servant half turned, she stepped aside, and there was a young show of scarlet and gilt in the garden.

"Good-evening," Thomas Evell said to Angenietje; "don't I look like the devil. Howe made us all cut off our queues." Angenietje Mey replied that she liked it. "You are more like the boys I know, Jacob and Carel and Maas." Thomas Evell added: "He is going to take our coats off too. You won't be able to tell us from the French and Indians. It will be a lot of fun, and more comfortable in the woods, but the older men are upset about the tradition of the regiment. They would rather be killed at dress parade than live forever behind a tree." Angenietje's gaze rested on a basket of tulip bulbs. "When do you suppose Lord Howe will march?" she asked. Thomas Evell didn't know, but he was certain it would be practically at once. "Colonel Charles Lee and Abercrombie were in his tent all morning. We will leave for Fort Ticonderoga any minute now. I'll be sorry, Angenietje. Will you?" She replied that it would be very nice to have the French beaten. That, he supposed, was all a soldier was for — to beat the French.

"If it is," he asserted, "I want to be something else. I'm sick of transports and camps and heathen the color of a copper penny. I am, Angenietje. If you're shocked I can't help it. I'd like to be a —a fur merchant in Albany."

"You'd find it pretty tiresome," she asserted.

"If I did, it would be your fault," he answered quickly. "You could keep anything from being tiresome. Just by being around. No more than that. It isn't so much that I hate the army," he explained further, "as it is I love something else." Angenietje Mey said: "You ought to tell that to Arendt. He would be the one most interested in it. He'd make a partnership with you at once." Thomas Evell complained that she always purposely misunderstood him.

"What I specially wanted to say," he continued, "was that you must see our play tomorrow evening. Johanna Reijckman is coming and she promised to stop for you. It's to be The Beaux' Stratagem and I am going to act a girl with a tower of powdered hair and a fan. We have to give it in a barn, but a regular curtain will be drawn at a signal." Angenietje clasped her hands. "Oh, I want to so much," she cried. "I want to more than anything. I don't see how it could hurt me. If Johanna is going, maybe I can." Thomas Evell solemnly asserted that it would be a historic occasion. "The first play in Albany. And there will be a ball at the English Tavern on Friday." But she was hopeless about that:

"I know they won't let me go to a ball. Mr. Eelkens has been horribly cross about everything lately. You'd never guess, from what he says in church, that the soldiers came here to save our lives." Evell went closer to her. "Angenietje, I wish I could really save your life." So did

she. "I'd hate to be scalped," she acknowledged. He frowned heavily. "You are sending me away from you in a dangerous spirit," he said somberly. "I am not sending you at all," she objected; "you are going with your regiment. I've agreed with everything you said." She gazed at him innocently. "What," he asked, "would you do if I kissed you?" That, she replied, wasn't important at all. "You ought to wonder what Eytie would do. Since she is on the kitchen steps talking to Cataline." There was something else:

"Johanna told me that when Pieter Krol got back from New York, or wherever he is, you were all going up the river for the day. She said you would spend the whole day together on an island. I want to come, Angenietje. I can get leave." She answered reluctantly: "I'm sorry, but I am afraid you can't. You see, it's our company and no one outside is allowed. It's like that here—if we grow up together we stay in a company until we are married. The boys of one never go with the . . . with another company."

"But that is silly," he protested. "Or it is for me. I didn't grow up with you. There is no reason why I can't go. Do you mean they wouldn't have me?" Angenietje didn't exactly know what she meant. "No one does it," she repeated. "They just don't. I can't think why. I'm sorry." Thomas Evell, apparently shifting the subject, asked: "Who is this Pieter Krol?"

"Why, why he is just Pieter Krol," Angenietje replied. "I don't know what else to tell you. Except he has gone to New York for the first time in a trading-sloop of his own. He'll be back very soon now. I expect he will think he is very important." Evell asked again: "Who is this

Pieter Krol?" Angenietje pointed out that she was trying to tell him. "I can't think of anything else, except that his father's name is Goossen, and that Pieter was the head of our company. But when he got a sloop he gave that up. It was too young." Thomas Evell admitted that he had heard of the young companies of Albany. "Is it true the girls never marry outside of them?" Angenietje Mey slowly answered that she supposed it was. He had also been told that plans for marriage were arranged very early. She nodded. He stood stiffly, questioning her with his eyes and voice. "Angenietje, have you promised to marry anyone?"

In the silence that followed his question the sharp voice of Eytie and Cataline's respectful murmurs were audible. The light was fading rapidly from the garden. "Angenietje, have you promised to marry Pieter Krol?" he demanded. "You have no right to ask me so much." There was a little gasp in her voice. "Cataline," she called, "come and get the baskets of tulip bulbs. I must go in to be ready for supper."

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VERY early of the evening following, Angenietje appeared on the stoep with a fine cap ruffled on a deep lace band and a pinked silk petticoat showing under her short skirt. Arendt, who was thirteen, was explaining to his father that he would soon be old enough to trade independently with the Indians. "I have already taken my canoe above the upper falls," he proceeded. "Fifty dollars would be enough to buy stock with. I would rather do that than

go down to New York in a sloop like Pieter Krol." Claes Mey made no reply, and Arendt sat rapt in a vision of such an expedition, with a single negro, right up into the hunting-ground of the Huron Indians. Liedya surveyed Angenietje with surprise. "That is the new petticoat and your best cap," she said. "You must be certain that Pieter Krol will get here this evening." Angenietje sat without committing herself.

"This is novel," Claes commented, "your best cap and petticoat for Pieter. Probably it is the effect of his being away. Or is there an officers' ball tonight?" Liedya wished that he wouldn't put such ideas in his children's heads. "You know very well we wouldn't let Angenietje go to a dance in a tavern. With the way officers drink. Mr. Eelkens is coming for supper and I hope you won't say things like that in front of him. Everyone doesn't understand you." That, he replied, was a mercy. "It's good, too, we all don't understand Angenietje." His gaze rested lightly on his daughter. "Perhaps she is dressed for the minister," he added. Angenietje couldn't see why anyone made a fuss over a cap and petticoat.

There was the sound of the cow bells approaching with evening, and the gilded weather-vanes, the sloops and lions and geese, on the roofs below burned in the level rays of the sun. Aeltje De Vos cried from her stoep: "Myndert says the soldiers are taking down their tents. They are about ready to march." Liedya Mey nodded and then rose as Mr. Eelkens came up the street. His face was even longer and more somber than customary. He had heard Mrs. De Vos and added, elliptically, that it was time. "I said the same thing only yesterday," Liedya Mey

told him. "I will be glad to see the soldiers gone." Mr. Eelkens took off his broad-brimmed black beaver hat. "There are worse menaces than death and the heathen," he proclaimed. "They are among us now. They are in our midst." He was squarely facing Angenietje. He proceeded:

"The young of Albany have been overtaken by an evil spirit. Either I am their minister and the voice of God or I am not. At times it seems I am not. I am told there is a ball advertised for this week and it is in my knowledge the British colonel at Mrs. Jenaberie's went home from the last one drunk. He was seen to stagger." Angenietje sighed. "There are some families here," he continued, "and should be high in our respect, that would be better in New York. There is what amounts to a court there and enough wickedness to accommodate them. Albany has always been a place raised for godliness." Claes Mey wasn't so certain of that.

"I always thought it was raised as a trading-post," he commented; "where seawant and rum were exchanged for furs." Mr. Eelkens ignored this. "A place of simple and God-serving people," he reiterated. "Until now the minister had authority. His word was attended to. But that, it seems, is all past. I tell you when we gave up the language of our fathers for English we entered into a compact with the devil. When we copied the English and forgot we were Dutchmen we took the first step downward. Sunday is no longer a day of rest. The streets are full of gigs and light women, and the fields—the abodes of His dumb creatures—are defiled with flags and soldiers and music." Liedya agreed. "It's a bedlam. I can hardly keep

the negroes at their work." There was something far more important than that, Mr. Eelkens instructed her. It was to keep her children at home. Arendt said positively that he didn't want to keep at home. "I want to go up on the Mackinac trading. I'll be sixteen in two years and a half." Claes Mey said with an air of rebuke that Mr. Eelkens wasn't interested in his worldly ventures. Mr. Eelkens studied Claes briefly.

"The worst," he announced, "is still to happen. His Majesty's whoremongers are going to act a play. They are going to dress and paint and powder like loose women! If any of my congregation go I will have them up before the deacons for discipline." Angenietje Mey was sitting with her hands clasped in her lap, her face was blank and her gaze properly lowered. Liedya admitted that she had heard the play discussed. "Some of the younger people are going. As you say their families belong in New York. However, I am afraid you will have trouble with them." Claes Mey's eyes were half shut and fixed on Angenietje. There was a speculative expression on his lips. Mr. Eelkens addressed him. "Claes Mey, would you permit a child of yours to see a play where men, who were supposed to be soldiers, were painted to represent females?"

"I can answer for him," Liedya anxiously interrupted her husband's debatable reply. "He would not." Angenietje sighed. "Claes may have his jokes about whatever he called it and rum, but our children are brought up decently. And that, Mr. Eelkens, is harder than it used to be. When I was a girl we didn't have redcoats quartered in the house and plays and balls. Then there were no gigs on the street Sunday except when it was necessary. It gets

worse, as you say, every year. But I will add this—my girls are good and pure at heart. It wouldn't occur to Angenietje here to go to a play. I must say that much in her defense." Claes asked his elder daughter: "Where is Mr. Evell?" She didn't know beyond the fact that he had said he wouldn't return for supper. Claes supposed duty kept him at the Pastures.

"There is Pieter Krol!" Arendt exclaimed. Aeltje De Vos called in through the open door: "Myndert, Pieter Krol is back from New York." Pieter was strongly built, the wind and sun of the river had reddened his face, and that made his light hair look like bleached flax, it gave his blue eyes a curious pale intentness. Liedya Mey kissed him, he shook Claes's hand and bowed to Mr. Eelkens. "Well, here I am. I didn't get lost," he said to Angenietje. "She guessed you would come," Liedya told him, "and put on her new silk petticoat and best cap." Angenietje smiled up at him. "I hope it was successful," she said. Pieter Krol laid a small package beside her on the bench. "At least I was able to bring you a present from New York."

He couldn't, however, remain for supper. "I must go home. I haven't been there at all yet. But I'll come back later. Maas De Hooges was on the wharf and he told me we were going up the river tomorrow." Angenietje replied: "It's decided then. I wasn't sure. But you must be tired of the river. Perhaps you would rather go another time." That, he said gravely, was all foolishness. "It will be a chance for us to talk." When he had gone Arendt asked Angenietje why she didn't open her present. "Yes," Liedya added, "let us all see it." Angenietje unwrapped the

paper slowly and a pair of silver shoe-buckles emerged.

"They are very nice and heavy," her mother asserted. "Of course now you have accepted them you know what that means." Claes Mey, a little impatiently, asked what it did mean. At that moment Johanna Reijckman came up to the Mey stoep. She wore a brightly flowered dress that left bare the whiteness of her throat and a great calash tied with impressive ribbons. "Johanna," Angenietje cried, "please wait." She hurried out and there was a quick whispering. Johanna, it was clear, was sharply annoyed. "Anyhow," she said audibly, "it's outrageous." Angenietje came slowly back alone. "Modesty in dress," Mr. Eelkens said, "is one of the characteristics of a godly mind. The body of a woman is an abhorrence to God and a torch for the lusts of men."

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THE rivermen worked their canoes standing in the stern, but the boys paddled like the Indians from their knees. Pieter's canoe was birchbark with high turned bows ornamented by Mohawk devices in dyed porcupine quills, and there was a stern-board for Angenietje to lean back on. No one else was with them, although another of the seven canoes proceeding up the river had been obliged to hold five. Pieter, of course, paddled strongly and well. Mostly they were close by the bank. They passed the Flats with its high bank and great elm trees hung with wild grape-vines and came opposite the wheat-fields beyond. "That one trip," Pieter Krol told Angenietje, "paid for the sloop. I even bought a new mainsail; the other

wouldn't set flat at the gaff; and that was what kept me in New York. I named her the Willemstadt," he went on. "It's very appropriate."

"Don't they sometimes," Angenietje asked, "isn't it a custom to call them after, rather can't they have prettier names?" It was possible, Pieter admitted. "Why, Angenietje, I might have named her after you. I never thought of that. But it's painted on now. When I get another sloop I will call her the Angenietje Mey. If I have many trips as successful as this one it won't be long. The next time I must take down more lumber. You wouldn't believe how New York is growing." Angenietje supposed it was very gay. "Tell me, Pieter, is it true the girls there wear stockings thin like lace and not ribbed with red clocks?" He hadn't noticed. "You must remember how important this was for us. I had no time for red clocks. Angenietje, there is no trouble about the cargo down, in September I will carry furs; it's the empty sail back I hate. I brought three passengers, but that only paid me sixty dollars.

"The thing to do, though it has never been tried from Albany, is to trade direct with the West Indies. I'd like to load right at the Islands with rum and coffee and chocolate and sugar and sell them here on Market street. The commissioner's charges in New York make it doubtful if you could get a profit in Albany. But I could bring up dry goods and hardware and wine from Holland. The trouble with us," Pieter Krol said, "is we have wanted so little and made most of that ourselves. I understand Lord Howe's troops have changed that with the taverns and officers full every day." Angenietje admitted there had

been some change. "Mr. Eelkens and people like mother hate it, but — but Johanna and girls like her think it's splendid. Why, Pieter, there was a play last night and she went."

"I heard something about it," he admitted. "All the boys saw it. I got in too late. There was too much else to do." Angenietje sat up with her hands clasping the thwarts of the canoe. "Oh, I wish we could have gone. I wanted to so much." He glanced at her coolly. "I didn't say anything about you," he pointed out. "A play is not the right place for a girl. Anyhow, not for the girl I want to marry." She sank back. "Suppose we talk about that, Angenietje," he proceeded. "I don't believe we have ever settled it definitely. But then we haven't had to since it has always been understood. I spoke to you about it first when I was nine years old and now I'm twenty."

When he was nine, Angenietje commented, she had been four.

That, his manner showed, was too obvious for notice.

"I will make another trip in August, shorter than this one, and another — with the furs — in the fall. After that I should like to get married. We could live with my family for the winter and then move into a house I can get high up on Jonker street near the fort. It's only wood, but it is well built and has a nice garden. I must find out about the well. There was something else, Angenietje, I wanted to speak about, and that was Cataline. I have been watching her and she's nearly useless. She is completely spoiled. It may not be her fault, it may be yours, but the result is the same. I suggest that we let your mother keep her and give us what she's worth. It ought to be close to eight or nine hundred dollars."

"Pieter!" she exclaimed, horrified, "I couldn't sell Cataline. Even to my own mother. Why, no one ever does that. It would be a scandal. Cataline would never get over it. It would kill her." Pieter Krol calmly replied that, apparently, she hadn't listened to him. "I said that Cataline was useless. She might be good for a rich woman, she might even be good for you very much later, but just now we can't afford that kind of servant. She would eat three times more than she was worth."

"After all, Pieter," Angenietje Mey reminded him, "we're not actually married. You can't decide everything for me today." He studied her with an amused patience. "Why, so we are not," he acknowledged cheerfully. "You are not Mrs. Pieter Krol yet. I suppose I ought to admit that the question is: Will you be? Do you want to be? All the rest, I can see, must be put off until you answer that. Well — ?" he paused, his paddle, dripping with the clear river-water, in air. She didn't reply and they drifted sideways and back. Pieter vigorously swung the canoe around. "It would be nicer," he resumed his comments and explanations, "to go at once to Jonker street, we really could afford that, but the other would save a lot. Then I would be away a great deal the first winter and you needn't be alone."

"I don't really mind being alone, Pieter," she told him. He replied significantly that so soon after their marriage solitude wouldn't be wise for her. He was managing the canoe with the instinct and faultless skill of an Indian. The others were all strung out behind. Ahead Angenietje could see the island they were bound for, a beach of white sand conspicuous on the dark water, against the thickets

of vines and trees. "Who is this ensign staying at your house?" Pieter Krol asked abruptly.

"He's an ensign and he's staying at the house," she answered blankly. "Do you mean what is his name? It's Thomas Evell, I believe. He seems to be very nice. Eytie makes special cakes for his supper." Pieter was surprised that Claes Mey had allowed him to be quartered at his home. "He could easily have stopped it." Angenietje explained that her father, because of his responsible position in the town, had thought he should take Mr. Evell. "Some people were so disagreeable about it. Arendt sees more of him than the rest of us. He would follow him to Quebec if it were possible." Pieter Krol said it was a wonder that Arendt hadn't tried to scalp him. "He practices being an Iroquois on everyone." Angenietje explained: "He is really getting to be a big boy, and talking about going up to the Mackinac now. Of course, father just laughs at him. But it won't be long."

"Claes Mey laughs at nearly everything," Pieter asserted. "If it hadn't been for that, Sir Charles Hardy would have made him mayor long ago. People talk about it, and, since he is your father, I don't like to hear it. I am glad you are more like your mother. You have her eyes and her quietness. No one is sure of what your father will do or say, but it's different with Mrs. Mey and you." They were opposite the beach and he drove the canoe diagonally across the swifter narrows. Before they struck, however, he was in the water, dragging the bow smoothly up on the sand. The canoe with Arendt and Maas De Hooges arrived next, and Arendt, in the water, lifted it

smoothly up on the beach. "If it had been a little longer we would have caught up to you," he declared. "You were talking all the time and an Indian wouldn't have said a word. Specially to a woman," Arendt added. "They never talk to women anyhow."

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"Carel Hendrickse!" Johanna called; "come and light the fire, now that you are leader. Pieter will be too grand." A boy in moccasins with a wide belt of black and white wampum, who moved with a light noiseless ease, poured a small measure of powder under heaped dry branches and primed his rifle. He knelt and the spark from the falling hammer set off a quick flame that caught among the wood. Dark tea was made, ham was broiled, and there was a black preserve of cherries. After that the boys vanished with their guns into the interior of the island. Angenietje and Johanna Reijckman washed the tin cups in the river; all the girls had baskets elaborately woven by Mohawk squaws in a common pattern; and soon there was a sedate chattering row on the sand addressed to knitting or finer needlework. The sun was high, but it was still behind the trees; the girls were in a shade cooled by the movement of the water along the shore. There was a general conversation about Pieter Krol: it was agreed that the trip to New York made him even more solemn than before.

"What do you think, Angenietje," Geertruy Jacobson asked directly. She was sitting with Cattryna Mey, she was Cattryna's age, and the momentary silence which met

her question was designed as a rebuke. "Pieter has every virtue," Johanna declared. "He is the most honest Dutchman left in Albany. The English will never affect him." The sun rose higher and invaded the beach with a hot light. The river sparkled. Angenietje had stopped knitting; her gaze was fastened on a bateau slowly coming up against the stream. Opposite the lower end of the island it turned out. It had turned too soon, however, and it was rowed up to the beach only after a long, difficult struggle. At the stern was a slender figure in a hunting-shirt. Angenietje said in a tone of surprise: "Someone is coming on shore." There was a feminine rustle of excitement, and Cattryna cried: "Why, it's Mr. Evell!"

He stopped, apparently confounded by the number of girls before him, and Johanna urged Angenietje to her feet. "You must go forward," she insisted; "now he is here. He may die of fright." Angenietje said formally: "Good-morning. I never expected to see you on the river so early." Thomas Evell replied that he had had no idea her company was composed only of girls. "It isn't," she told him. "The boys always hunt or fish until late and we sew. They come back for supper." He said: "I had to find where you had gone and see you at once. I haven't more than half an hour. Angenietje, we are leaving this afternoon. Do you suppose you could take a walk with me?" How could she, Angenietje answered; it would look so funny.

"It's the last chance I have to see you before I go," Thomas Evell urged her. Angenietje's hands caught together. "Everybody would talk." Her voice was low and wretched. "I didn't know you were leaving Albany so

soon. When do you think Lord Howe will come back?" He was, obviously, unable to say. "Perhaps never." Thomas Evell was astonishingly young and desperately serious. "Angenietje, come down by the bateau; everyone can see you there; I must talk to you. It couldn't be a worse place, but I can't help that now." They passed the file of canoes to where the flat-bottomed wooden boat was anchored in the dry sand. "At least we can get in it," he asserted. "There will be a frightful talk," she repeated. "That can't be helped either. Listen, Angenietje:

"Do you remember what I said about staying in Albany? Well, that's impossible, of course. But there is something else I can do. I went to Howe and explained some things, and he's in favor of it. He says that with my family what it is, it would be easy. Angenietje, I want to leave the regiment and be attached to Sir Charles Hardy's staff in New York. In New York, Angenietje." She asked: "Would you like that? But of course you would. It is so gay. There are balls and plays in New York all the time. You could go to one every night." He hadn't thought of that. "You are the reason I want to get transferred. When the time came and I thought of leaving you I couldn't. I couldn't, Angenietje. I couldn't and go on living. When I realized what it meant, I saw that I should die. Most of me. The best. All that I really liked. I'd give up everything in England only to be near you. I'm not too young to know my mind, Angenietje; if I'm old enough to be a King's officer and get killed I am old enough to be in love. With you.

"It's horrible to say it like this, with all those girls there, giggling at me. You must try to understand how

serious it is. How much I have to have you. You can't be going to marry Pieter Krol, Angenietje. Anyhow, tell me that much. If you say there is no one else in your heart I'll go back to camp happy. I will be happy then because when I come back you may marry me. I can't even touch you," he said. "It would only make it worse if you could." After she had spoken she smiled at him as though in an effort to soften the implication of her words. "Then you have given him your promise," Thomas Evell said.

"A long while ago," Angenietje told him; "when we were children. Younger than Cattryna. Our families want it. Pieter brought me a pair of silver buckles from New York, and he thinks we ought to — to be married very soon." Evell interrupted her impetuously. "But all that hasn't a thing to do with it. Are you in love with him?" Angenietje reminded him that he must talk more carefully. "Do you love Pieter Krol?" he repeated quietly. "I can't tell that," she answered. "Isn't it the time to love after you are married? I don't know. I wish I did. Sometimes it makes me very unhappy. Since — since you came to Albany. Perhaps it would have been better if you had stayed away." She managed to speak lightly, to convey the impression that it was all quite unimportant.

"I can't agree with you," Thomas Evell said almost disagreeably. "But if it was a mistake I will pay for it. You've made it pretty clear you won't." She asked him if he wanted to make her cry. "You will," she warned him. "Before all the girls, and then I'll be disgraced. I wish you would go." He leaned forward intense and young and golden in the sun. "Angenietje, will you marry

me when I come back from Fort Ticonderoga?" She rose. "I must go back," she said gently. "I am sorry if you are hurt." He asserted that without her it didn't matter whether he came back from the woods or not, and her bearing hardened instinctively. "You mustn't say words like that," Angenietje informed him. She might have been the elder by twenty years. "It's wicked and useless too. Johanna," she called; "Lord Howe and Mr. Evell are leaving tonight. Come and say good-by to them."

When the bateau had been shoved off into the river and they walked back up the beach Johanna's arm was tight around Angenietje Mey's waist. They were met with a flood of questions and comments. It was a shame the troops were going. Albany would be like a church again. It was too bad, Geertruy Jacobson announced, that Mr. Eelkens wasn't going with them. A certain restrained approval was allowed to reward that. Angenietje took up her knitting. The bateau was just visible, far down the river. It vanished. The boys returned in a mass sooner than customary. "Pieter Krol shot a buck!" Jacob Roseboom cried; "we can have venison for supper. He shot it in the water and we had to swim out for it."

"I am sorry, Pieter, I have a pain in my head," Angenietje told Pieter Krol. They were in his canoe again, evening was descending on the water, veiling the shores, and they were returning. "It's the long day in the sun," he replied. "We won't go with the company again. That is over for us, Angenietje, we are grown up. You look older since the little time I have been away." She didn't answer. Her eyes were closed, her lips were bright and

parted, her body lay relaxed in an attitude of profound exhaustion.

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Claes Mey, on his stoep, was delivering a surprisingly long discourse to his wife Liedya and Angenietje. He only deserted his aphorisms, his usual air of light detachment, under strong feeling. It was late Sunday afternoon, and he was concerned with Mr. Eelkens's sermon. "The private truth about him," he proceeded, "is that he is exactly wrong. Mr. Eelkens insists that Albany, in his opinion, is going fast to the devil; he thinks we are getting worse every day; when it's a fact that all his prayers are being answered. The old people and the women are coming to rule the town. Lord Howe's army was only a glass to show us how long our faces were. He keeps talking about changes, too, when he only came from Leyden ten years ago. To hear him you'd think he helped Henry Corstiaensen build the original trading-post on Castle Island. When I was born Albany was already in the British Dominion; but my father was alive in the first patroonship; the Indians had hardly stopped roasting Dutchmen. There was only the fort with a few traders and some soldiers and a white woman or two. When I was a boy it wasn't a great deal more. Not a great deal," Claes declared.

"But at least there was some freedom. A man had his own opinions as well as his cornfield. He could laugh. I wonder what Mr. Eelkens would have thought of the Mahikan Indian girls and Albany then. The Mahikans

were peaceful; they hadn't been driven out yet by the wars; and their villages were strung all along the river; they had gardens and planted fields and it was very harmonious. In summer they sat around drunk or sober under the stockade, and the young Dutchmen tried to marry their prettiest girls. They were pretty, too, with woven red bands on their foreheads, and their skirts fancy with shells. Hardly any darker than the Dutch. They wore their hair, I remember, like a beaver tail, and had fine naked shoulders. The torches, as Mr. Eelkens called them, were very bright. My Uncle Jan married one, his wife came into the fort with him, but they didn't stay there long — she took him away. We used to visit them in a house built of bark, a long grape-arbor of a house. He was the most contented man I ever saw.

"Mr. Eelkens would say he was lost. Damned. Today the people of Albany would look on him as a disgrace. To them most of the old free life would be disgraceful. Well, there is little enough of it left, and not much of the fur either. The canoes used to come down the river loaded to the water with beaver and otter skins. And the price! It was very different from Pieter Krol and his bales of New York dry goods. Pieter," Claes Mey added, "is a good boy, but he is young and he isn't young. I hope when he gets older he'll be younger. I can see it in his face that he thinks I'm to be regretted." He waved his arm so sharply that it broke the stem of his pipe. Liedya observed placidly: "It seems to be too bad you didn't marry the Indian girl. I can't make out to save me what you think of Pieter Krol . . . or of much else." Angenietje, who was knitting, said nothing. She looked up

with an absent fixed expression, a faint air of troubled wonder.

"Pieter is all right," Claes admitted. "He only bothers me because he is too correct. He ought to reassure Mr. Eelkens with his cry that everything is going to the devil. When I look at Pieter Krol I think of my Uncle Jan sitting in front of his bark house and rolling bowstrings of rawhide between his palms. Jan would roll bowstrings from sunrise to dark and feel that the day was well occupied. Or he could sit without the bowstings for just as long. His wife had a name that meant the flower that drove away the snow. She washed everything including herself in the river. In the sunlight. Jan you couldn't call industrious. And I wonder? I do indeed." Liedya, for her part, declared that his uncle sounded amazingly like a lazy reprobate: "Living with a shameless heathen woman and having heathen children. I am glad that Arendt isn't here to listen to such stuff."

Myndert De Vos had appeared on his stoep, and Aeltje called to the Meys. "Myndert says they are bringing Lord Howe's body back to Albany tomorrow. He's to be buried in St. Peter's Church." Angenietje's hands were still. "He says," Aeltje continued, "Lord Howe was killed at the first attack and the English were beaten back in disorder. Hardly one escaped the knives of the French Indians." Claes Mey made no reply; he went into the house after a fresh pipe. When he returned, his flood of questioning words had subsided. He seemed depressed. "What will happen to us now with the English retreating I can't think," Liedya said. "I suppose any time the French will be in Albany. That ought to please you,

Claes, for it will bring back your Uncle Jan's day again." That, he replied, was gone forever. "The English are not retreating," he explained; "they are the future and, as you said, the French belong to the past. For them America was an adventure and not a settlement. We will have a bigger army next year and if that isn't enough a bigger one still the year after."

The street was at once subdued and clear in a grey evening light, the warm tone of the rose-brick gables was cooled, the fire had vanished from the gilded weather-vanes below. The old Dutch church, a solid stone block in the cobble-paved middle of Pearl street, was dark and solemn. Beyond the houses and gardens of Market street the river was dark. Angenietje shuddered slowly. Someone, Liedya suggested, was walking over her grave. She didn't answer; she hadn't taken up her knitting; it lay in a soft green heap transfixed by long white bone needles on her lap. "I will be glad to have you settled," Liedya asserted. "You are getting so much like your father I don't know what to think of you either. It's a fine thing Pieter Krol is so patient. You have hardly spoken to him once that I've heard in a week." Claes leaned forward:

"Angenietje, tell me now, before it is too late — do you want to marry Pieter Krol? If you don't I will see him and Goossen Krol at once. Tonight." Liedya, flushed with alarm, followed her habit of answering, at times of stress, for her family. "Of all your crazy questions that is the worst! Certainly Angenietje wants to marry Pieter Krol. She has thought about it since they were children. She couldn't change her mind now. It would be an outrage. Where, I ask you, could Angenietje

find a better man than Pieter?" Claes raised his hand for her to be still. "Angenietje?" he repeated. She gazed at him without answering, the blank look still on her eyes. Apparently she hadn't heard him.

"I want you to be happy," he explained; "I love you very dearly. If it's possible I want to be wise for you. But can I? I am not so certain as your mother. Perhaps that has been my main fault. I don't seem to agree with what the world commends. I want you to be happy." His voice was strange with a sudden unaccustomed depth and pain. Suddenly Angenietje turned away from him. "Listen," she said.

From the lower town there came the thin sharp tones of fifes in the shrill mournfulness of a dirge. Angenietje carefully laid aside the knitting and rose; she stood intently on the edge of the stoep. Then, without a backward glance, she went down the street. Her walk grew faster; when she vanished she was running with fluttering skirts. Liedya Mey gasped. "Claes, she's out of her mind, go after her quickly." He didn't move, but sat staring at the bowl of his pipe. Liedya took him by the shoulder; she shook him. "Claes, quickly. Everyone on the street is sitting out." He looked up and told her to be silent. "No one can go after Angenietje. She is too far from all of us. The people on the street can be damned." Liedya Mey sank in despair on the bench.

"You are all mad," she declared; "here you are cursing the neighbors and Angenietje running wild through the town." Claes Mey stood gazing toward the river. "She is coming back," he said. Angenietje approached with her arm about the shoulders of a gaunt boy in a torn grey

shirt; his buckskin breeches and moccasins were sodden; his face colorless except for the pits of black shadow under his eyes and a deep red scrape that crossed his cheek and tore at an ear. Angenietje brought him up on the stoep. "He's here," she said with a remote smile. They went into the house; the sound of her slow firm footsteps and the wet softness of moccasins mounting the stairs were audible without. "Claes," Liedya could no more than whisper, "she's taken him up into her bedroom." He replied: "I'm glad of it. That is where Thomas Evell belongs. In her bed." He slowly packed tobacco into his pipe. "After all I must go to the Krols's. A little of Albany is left in spite of Mr. Eelkens." A cloud of smoke obscured him. Liedya Mey confessed that she was afraid to look in the direction even of Aeltje De Vos.

IV.

FOUR

THE RAMAPO was no more than made fast to the Landing at Natchez, she had not settled to the levee and the River, when Sylvester Dering stepped quickly on shore. He was a slight man and dark, totally inconspicuous in features, with a moderate black felt hat, a dark green coat that flapped about his knees, white trousers, and a flowered waistcoat showing a trace of ruffle. There was, as usual, a great clamor on the Landing: the cries and curses of the negroes fighting for the small trunks and bags of arriving passengers; the loud comments of indifferent free negroes; a shrill music and drunken shouts from a dram-shop close by; there was a scrape of dancing feet and the metallic and importunate voices of girls with carmine cheeks and wide gay skirts. The smell of liquor was as palpable on the air as the clouds of tobacco smoke eddying between the old wooden houses and the newly arrived steamboat.

A negro tried to drag Sylvester Dering's bag from his hand, but in a level cold voice Dering told him to drop it. The negro persisted, declaring that no white gentleman should carry a valise. He would take him to any hotel, the Mansion House or Parker's up in Natchez on the Hill; or if he wanted to stay down on the Landing he could show him everything, find him anything. Dering half turned, in a sudden anger, and the negro fell away

muttering. A short street led back from the levee to the steep face of the Bluff that rose high above the River, and Sylvester Dering followed it to a two-story wooden building with a gallery across the front. It was the lower hotel, and inside he nodded to the tall and thin proprietor, who greeted him with the voice of the Green Mountains. "Doctor Polidore?" he inquired. The Doctor, he was told, was up in his room; the room next to his was free; a boy took the bag.

Dering walked down the upper corridor and knocked on one of the succession of slatted doors. An abrupt voice replied: Doctor Polidore, immensely fat, was seated in a very dirty shirt, open on his rolling throat, mussed white linen trousers, socks, and no shoes. He had a palm-leaf fan. At his back, by a window, there was a handsome and vicious-looking quadroon woman in a single slip. "I can see you came up on the Ramapo," the Doctor proceeded; "but how the devil did you get here so quick? I trust there was no trouble."

Sylvester Dering nodded briefly to the woman and sat down. He was, strangely, very tired; and he poured out a deep drink of Medford rum from the black bottle on a table. He dropped a few crystals of sugar into his glass. "Yes and no," Dering replied. He took a drink and set his glass down hard beside the bottle. "Damn it," he said bitterly, "I'm sick of the River. I'm sick of steamboats and snags and landings like this. But I'm sicker than all of cards." Polidore fanned himself vigorously, waiting. "Yes and no," Sylvester Dering repeated; "I caught a planter coming up with a coffle of niggers and took them from him. He went down by the texas with a pistol. Poli-

dore, he was a young planter and he had his wife with him. She was young. Perhaps fifteen." Polidore asked if it had made a smoke. "The Ramapo was just coming into the Landing and I stepped off. No, we won't hear from it that way. I got the cards from the bar. You know about them."

The Doctor said that he had better see the captain of the steamboat. But it would do later. In the cool. "Myrtle," he directed the quadroon, "bring Mr. Dering and me the cigars. You're so damn worthless I ought to sell you. Only last week a gentleman going down on the Olive Branch who saw you on the levee, offered me a thousand dollars for you." The woman, with a rolling walk, asked if he was a New Orleans gentleman. "Because if he was a New Orleans gentleman I'd been right glad to go with him."

"He was from somewhere down the Coast below Baton Rouge. I told him there was so much sin in your yellow hide I couldn't let it go for less than fifteen hundred." Dering smoked silently, with a fixed gaze, his body loose and weary. "I'm sick of it," he repeated finally. Doctor Polidore asserted that lately Dering's luck had been bad. "I mean the casualties. There was the man you shot on the Eagle and the little difficulty on the Volcano. It got to be right well understood you helped him off the stern. Three in a year is right many." Dering answered that he had had to shoot or be killed. The man who had gone into the River had all but put a knife in him. Polidore didn't doubt that. "It was just bad luck. In your line of activity it's a mistake to be conspicuous. If you get a reputation for killing, every hot-head on the River has you marked. The peaceable gambler lasts longest. He holds the best card."

"I'm done with it," Sylvester Dering told him. "I'm done with faro and brag. I'm near forty and too old. The cut on my left arm makes that hand almost useless. But that's not it," he admitted. "I saw that girl on the Ramapo; she had little black slippers and curls all round her cheeks. He was a good kind of planter too and bowed when he left the table. Polidore," his voice became a sharp inquiry, "I didn't take the niggers. Anyhow she has them." In that, the Doctor replied, he had been right. "Besides, under the circumstances, I doubt if you could have got them. But I wouldn't make up my mind to anything now. Go down to New Orleans on the next boat and lie around a month. You have some money I know. Then things will look different. I'll be there myself soon. When you're feeling better we'll look around for a likely place in the city and get us some cotton."

Sylvester Dering said again that he was done with gambling. He finished his rum and rose. "Fall me out of your calculations. I'm off the River." In his room he bolted the door and dropped on the bed, his hands caught behind his head. He stared up at the mosquito bar looped and fastened to the bare boards of the ceiling. Dering thought that he heard the sound of a woman — a girl with curls about her bright cheeks — sobbing. From a room beyond. It was only his imagination, he decided. A very pleasant young planter with a great deal of drink in him. If Dering had noticed the amount he would have stopped play, let him win back most of the niggers. He had done that before. It wasn't sentiment but business. He had been wrong anyhow since it was generally a mistake to play with the younger planters . . . unless it was

clear they made a great deal of cotton or were swells from New Orleans. He had been as wrong as hell! But it was curious how it had affected him — like a blow in the stomach. It had crumpled him up. However, he realized that he had been uncomfortable before. But nothing to prepare him for such an acute, a physical, sickness.

There was a churning of paddle-wheels from the River; the day had gone, it was dark; but he hadn't moved. The noise on the streets, narrow defiles of mud and nameless filth with narrow and broken, half-sunk sidewalks, had increased with the darkness. Suddenly it frightened him. With all the rest, it seemed, in a moment, he had become a coward. If the house caught fire he felt he could hardly bring himself to leave and face the life, the death, outside. The thick voice of Polidore, the giggle of the quadroon, sounded through the thin partition of the rooms.

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He slept late, a negro brought coffee to him; Dering ignored the breakfast below in the dining-room. The Landing was strangely, unnaturally, quiet and he remembered that it was Sunday morning — the gamblers and negroes, the fiddlers and spent girls, were sleeping. It was very hot. There was no sound from Doctor Polidore's room. Sylvester Dering was glad of that; he didn't want to see Polidore or his yellow skinful of sin, a wench out of the blood and murder and burning of Santo Domingo. It was so hot that his body, his hair — sweeping in a dark line across his forehead to the bottom of an ear — were wet. They were soaked. He stirred uneasily, half

lying on a tumbled bed, remembering the young planter. Dering's hatred of everything that had to do with his life on the River had survived the night. His discomfort was increased.

However, he couldn't stay in bed all day; not in a bed like the one under him; he couldn't stay in such a room. But it was a long while before he moved: he dressed slowly, a glass of rum and sugar at his hand. He discovered that his new aversions extended even to his clothes. He flung a green velvet waistcoat on the floor. At last in fresh white trousers and polished boots, a coat of brown Holland and nankeen vest, he went down to the gallery of the hotel. The wretched street was empty and now dark of sunlight. But it wasn't cooler because of that. The River was like a great flood of liquid metal.

On the left the road to Natchez on the Bluff mounted at a sharp angle; the shanties under the ruined framework built to carry cotton down to the steamboats and ships along the levee were active in their sale of villainous rum and nigger-head tobacco. Above him, hidden behind the white face of the Bluff, was another — the actual — Natchez. Although he had been up and down the River countless times, he had seen no more of it than the church steeples and lighthouse; it might at least be cooler there; he determined to make the ascent.

The road was long and steep and thick with a powder-like dust that covered his clothes and dried in a hard film on his lips. He had been a fool to attempt it before evening. He had been a fool to leave his hotel at all. It had been possible for him to hire a carriage. More than once he was at the point of turning to address the immeasur-

ably easier task of descent: he had no reason for going on; it wouldn't be cooler. Then suddenly, out of the clouds of white dust, he saw that he was at the top of the Bluff. He had left the dust, the weariness of the road, for a clear tide of golden light. He was in a world of gold and slumberous green foliage.

Sylvester Dering was standing on a wide grassy esplanade that lay parallel to the River; it was deeply shaded with trees, set with benches; he had a sense of transcendent peacefulness. There was no movement, for the moment there was no sound; the light from the lowering sun was so strong that he felt it must shine through his body, turning it from a thing of fatal flesh to gold. He was beside a bench and he sat quietly, motionless with one knee over the other. Behind him the town sloped gently away from the River — there was a street planted and canopied and cool with China trees — and beyond there were gentle hills, low white plantation-houses half hidden and tranquil under great vine-hung trees, in field upon field of flowering cotton.

More immediately at his left there was a long colonnaded dwelling, a lawn with live oaks and sycamores deep with moss, and, at the rear, a latticed octagonal summerhouse. But on his right was the most beautiful mansion he had ever seen: it was on a slight rise, and from its portico and high white columns gardens fell away in bright parterres to the very edge of the Bluff. There were walks set with lemon and orange trees, arcades of yellow roses, summerhouses in thickets of oleander, grottoes with fern and emerald moss, black-green magnolias and tulip trees. There were banks covered with pink blossom;

the sweetness of lemon-scented geraniums reached him on the esplanade.

The golden light, it seemed, had actually penetrated to his heart; all his disturbance had gone; the peace about him had taken him to itself. It had made him one with it. Far below, the River ran dark and strong between its banks and, beyond, the forests of Louisiana reached vast and dark and unbroken to the western horizon. On the opposite bank he could see the inconsequential clearing and the houses, few and minute, of Vidalia. There, he knew, in an open grove of live oaks, was the duelling-ground of Natchez. A steam ferry ran between the Landing and Vidalia. It was fast to the levee below now, but there was a line of keel boats drifting down the River from the Ohio. Kentucky keel boats. Closer inshore a steamboat — it looked so small that he might easily have taken it in his hand — was pouring black smoke from its twin stacks and making a slow way against the current. He could just see, like pinches of white cotton, the stir along her sides from the paddle-wheels.

The Landing, directly below him, was waking up, moving about. It was all crowded in a batture not more than half a mile long. The roofs of the lower town, of the storehouses and dwellings and dram-shops, were flattened on the narrow sandy ledge. At the upper end of the levee there was a great congregation of flatboats laden with the produce, the bacon and hams and green vegetables, of the states along the upper Mississippi and Ohio. Figures stirred over them and there was a thin climbing smoke from the cooking on the decks. Lower down were three steamboats taking on freight and be-

side them a ship with a dark hull and gay flags at the mastheads. The Landing was waking up: sound floated up to Sylvester Dering like the humming of bees. It was more threatening, more dangerous, than that —

The streets on the north were filled with their habitual free and idle negroes constantly moving in and out of the low taverns; their voices rose in a rich and hysterical and diminished volume. To the south, under the cliff, the street of the gambling-houses and the girls actually overhung the River. The violins were already shrill with dance tunes; Dering could hear the monotonous repetitions of the croupiers at the roulette tables. At the entrance to the United States barracks a soldier in a grey tunic was filling the air with a drunken shouting.

There was a ceaseless fall and shuffle of feet and strains of laughter shriller than the shrillness of the music. To Sylvester Dering, bathed in shining peace, the Landing was inconceivably horrible . . . like a hell. It was hell! He couldn't see how existence in it had been possible; he didn't see how he would bring himself to return. Even for his bag. It was almost dark and there were smoky flares of light, a broken lurid brightness, below. The smoke and blaze and sulphur of hell. God, he couldn't! Not to that. He wanted to stay forever on the high green Bluff, in the heaven of its quiet and flowers and cool purity.

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It was night when he descended to the Landing, he was hungry and — supper at the tavern had long been over — he occupied an inconspicuous table at a gambling-house

where he was served with food. A girl sat down with him; she drank sherry and bitters, and then drifted away. Dering had been hardly conscious of her presence, her words. His vision, his mind, were filled with the golden radiance. The proprietor, a Spaniard in a stovepipe hat with the narrow feet of a dancing-master, spoke to him. "Mr. Dering," he said, "if you are off the River for a day or so we might be a help to each other. I'd like to have you deal for the house." He declined the invitation politely. The fiddles, in a corner, were tuning up; a roulette wheel was dismounted and a croupier attending to its mechanism; a negro in a white coat was placing champagne buckets by the tables laid for suppers. It was all painfully familiar, wearisome, meaningless.

It oppressed him so heavily that he felt he must go at once—he would leave the gambling-house, the Landing, and never return. He was unprepared for such a sweeping decision, it had come automatically into his mind; but instantly he realized that he must carry it out. Yes, he was done with gambling on steamboats. A new cheerfulness and hope possessed him at that realization; already he felt free of all the past; it was as though he had actually left the Landing for the top of the Bluff. Sylvester Dering was thankful, too, that it had been his necessary habit to keep a large amount of money constantly with him: at present he had slightly under five thousand dollars.

It was even hotter than it had been at noon; the street was absolutely crowded, the air thick with the fine dust and perfumes and the musk of the negroes. The doors to the gambling-houses and dram-shops were open on the games of chance, the pallid intent faces of players, and

the drinking. It was like a cyclorama, Sylvester Dering thought, a painted evil show that he was leaving as fast as possible. In his room at the hotel he saw that his determination required the recognition, the necessity, of some practical details. What he planned to do was to leave behind, in a moment, forever, all his old life. If any of it followed him or clung to him, he considered, he would fail in his hope. For example, there were things in his bag tainted with the past.

In the end they turned out to be no more than a small gaudy pile of clothes. He kept two bottles of superior West India rum and his pistol, since it was of the new percussion kind, and had a general place in life outside the needs peculiar to gambling. With his bag lightened and strapped he went to the door of Doctor Polidore's room. The Doctor was in, preparing for the evening's adventure in the Landing by winding himself into his long muslin neckcloth — the quadroon, with one end, stood at a distance from him while Polidore revolved himself toward her. As a result he was miraculously red in the face, sweating vigorously, and of a doubtful humor. He said: "I sent Myrtle in after you twice, but you couldn't be found."

"I was up on the Bluff," Dering replied briefly. He sat watching Doctor Polidore with tight lips, somber eyes. "I have something to say that I want you to listen to very carefully," he proceeded. "You must understand it's not just talk. No, by God!" Polidore told him to wait until they had cigars and he sat down. He said that his head was going around like a paddle-wheel. "I believe that damn nigger was looking to choke me." The quadroon replied that if she wanted to it wouldn't be difficult. "It

wouldn't be difficult to let a little lead in you either," the Doctor replied. As a matter of fact there was a pistol on the table beside the black bottle of rum. "You're not going to shoot me," she replied lazily. "I'm too much money."

Sylvester Dering interrupted them. "If you're done with the nigger," he asserted, "I'll go on. It's this, Polidore. I'm through with the River." The Doctor reminded Dering that he'd heard that yesterday. "Not exactly," Dering answered; "or, anyway, not like this. I am off the River forever. I am never coming back on it; that is, to gamble. No more brag and faro and the pink water that looks like drink. No more fixed cards from the bar. Understand, I am not expressing an opinion about it; I am only speaking for myself. I don't want anything more to do with it, or with you."

Doctor Polidore's gaze, which had been wandering, immediately concentrated on Sylvester Dering. The pupils of his grey eyes were sharply contracted. "What am I doing among your troubles?" he demanded. "Nothing," Dering admitted. "And that's it—you're not among them. You have nothing to do with them." He rose. "From now on you have no interest in me of any kind. You don't know me. If you'd see me on the street I would be a stranger you knew nothing about. Cared nothing for. Polidore, do you understand?"

"The River isn't good enough for you. If that's it. The men you've known and depended on, who watched things for you and stood behind you, are not good enough now you think you have taken the veil."

"Yes," Sylvester Dering said frankly; "to a certain

extent it is. I don't exactly mean that they are not good enough for me, but not for what I want to do. They couldn't be a part of the life I want to — well, go up to."

"Up on the Bluff," the Doctor assisted him. "It would be interesting to hear your opinion of me." His hand, Dering saw, was on the table. "I haven't an opinion of you at all," he said; "it's gone with all the rest that concerns you and used to concern me. I've just tried to make something clear. If you won't accept it that way, I can't make you, but I will say this once more — if you ever see me again, under any circumstance that could happen, I don't expect you to know me or to speak to me. If you do I warn you I won't acknowledge it."

Doctor Polidore was apparently lost in thought. Dering stood without movement. He was at once motionless and lightly poised on his feet; his body was alert and gathered. "Well," Polidore said with a sudden harshness, "why the hell are you in my room? If that's what you think. You're just another gambler with his blood turned pale. You're useless as far as I can see." His voice was angry, but his gaze was cold and steady. Dering answered him very slowly. "I'm willing to pass over the color of my blood. I can remember when I wouldn't be, but I am now. I only came in here to warn you; to warn you, Polidore; and since you understand, I'm leaving your room right away."

He turned and walked deliberately to the door: the quadroon sniggered and he realized that there was a fair chance Doctor Polidore would shoot him in the back. He didn't. This time, Sylvester Dering told himself, he would ride up to the land above in a dignified propriety. "The Mansion House," he told the driver. The only open room

in the house, the proprietor informed him, was on the gallery; usually it was reserved for ladies; but he, Isaac Cordes, might have it. Isaac Cordes was the name Dering had announced as his own.

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The room was large and comfortable, long windows opened on the gallery, and the gallery roof kept it shadowy and cool. He sat for a long while, wholly satisfied by his peace and seclusion, his mind idly turning from one necessity to another: he must buy himself some appropriate clothes. If the name Sylvester Dering was attached to any of his belongings it must be destroyed. He must accustom himself immediately to thinking and speaking as Isaac Cordes. An error there would be fatal. He was, Dering decided, a leisurely traveler from Connecticut; the actual state of his birth. He had come by ship from New York to New Orleans and was proceeding as slowly as he liked up the River to Pittsburgh. It would be splendid, he thought, to spend the rest of his days in Natchez, high above the world. He would be safe from excessive curiosity for the simple reason that he had no demands to make, no plan to put into operation. Sylvester—Isaac Cordes, wanted nothing, he would demand nothing; he'd rigorously maintain a pleasant remoteness from individuals.

The arrangement of the town, he discovered, was simple and pastoral in the extreme—there were perhaps seven streets parallel with the River, about six at right angles. Usually they were wide and planted with China

trees. Main street had impressive blocks of two-story brick buildings. The brick courthouse stood on a wide green square, surrounded by the offices of the Court and the offices of the lawyers, set in a rich dark foliage. There was a bank with a colonnade, a Masonic hall which advertised a dancing-academy on the lower floor, a theater with arched entrances of brick. This all engaged him enormously, he admired it prodigiously, it was exactly what he wanted it to be.

He was surprised by the number of private carriages on the Main street; they belonged, of course, to the planters, whose families drove in from the surrounding country. When there were men, they rode handsomely, consciously graceful, beside the carriages. Invariably they wore wide white hats, low-crowned, and white coats, and, on horse or dismounted, they all carried thin whips. The ordinary at the Mansion House filled the long dining-room with the planters in boots, with lawyers and the superior men of local affairs. It was very familiar with greetings and laughter, informal discussions of cotton and slaves and of a ball that had been held the night before at Richardson's Hotel. The man at Sylvester's left was young, he had a dark finely moulded face, and a candid smile. He addressed several generalities to Dering — but he was, in reality, Isaac Cordes — and then paused, evidently to allow a stranger to him and to Natchez to announce, if he saw fit, something of his standing. Isaac Cordes was from Connecticut, he was traveling at his own time through the southwest and up to Pittsburgh; and he was so taken with Natchez that, for the present anyhow, he owned no intention of moving on.

"Excellent," the younger man replied; "my name is Damaris Vaun. I'm either a lawyer or a planter; like a great many men about here I couldn't tell you which. We study for the bar and practice for a while, but what we think about is cotton. By the time we're thirty, most of us are on a plantation." He rose. "We all take our meals here, too, so I'll see you again." He moved away and greeted as judge a man even younger than himself, not more than twenty-four or five. At dusk Isaac Cordes — he was rigorously drilling his mind in that change — returned to the esplanade over the River. It was the same as before, the gold of the sunlight paled to rose; far below him the River was black; the forests of Louisiana were lost in a distant haze.

He was interested in the mansion on his right; it was by far the most beautiful he had ever seen. In the twilight the terraced gardens were magical; mingled and sweet perfumes drifted out to him. There was a stir by a hedge of oleanders; it was a girl; he couldn't see her very clearly. But he realized that her arms were bare and that she was young and slender. He had an impression of a fragile and delicate loveliness. At any rate Isaac Cordes liked to think of her that way; then she was appropriate in the garden, under the oleanders. For him she was as fine and remote and fragrant as the petals of the flowers. Not a girl at all in the sense that he had, for so long, known girls.

He remembered Doctor Polidore's quadroon from the infernal horror of Santo Domingo, and he grew conscious of the sounds rising from the Landing — the laughter and violins and stilted phrases of the stilted croupiers. A

steamboat sounded its exhaust below on the River, a steamboat with low-pressure boilers, probably the Louisiana. Snatches of dance music. A passionate and half-strangled cry. Wretched unhappiness. Hell! But he had escaped from it. He had broken away before it was too late. The peace in him deepened at the prospect of the peaceful days reaching before him. Damaris Vaun was a very engaging young man. He had been extremely civil. A lawyer and a cotton planter. The youngest judge he had ever seen. A pistol-shot echoed like the crack of a whip from below.

If he stayed in Natchez, Isaac Cordes realized, he would have to own a horse. No one with any pretensions to decency walked. He could ride out into the country in the evenings, between the flowering fields of cotton. Soon the light hands, the women and the children, would be picking the first of the crop. The truth was that he should have a nigger. A gentleman would. The girl had vanished from the garden. She was gone. Still he was glad to know that she had been there. That was enough. It was all he wanted. When he returned to the Mansion House, Damaris Vaun was standing on the pavement with a man whom he introduced as Mr. Cosmus Gibbes.

"There was a thing I wanted to ask you about," Isaac said to Vaun at the first opportunity. "I lost my servant on the River — I must admit to you at brag — and I would be more comfortable with another. I'd like to buy one if I could find a likely boy at anything near a fair price. Since I'm not known I'm prepared to pay for him — I have a deposit at the Agricultural Bank — instead of the usual four months' note."

"Do what you please about the terms," Vaun replied; "although no one would ask a gentleman to pay for a nigger at sight. There is a slave market at China Grove, about a mile out. I am going to Washington tomorrow evening, and I should be glad to ride that far with you and introduce you to John Ackles, the dealer." Isaac Cordes thanked him and accepted his offer, but at supper he took care to sit at a distance from Vaun and Cosmus Gibbes. He wanted to avoid the appearance of a too great eagerness in searching for acquaintances.

After supper he sat on the dark gallery by his room, smoking in the still heat of the night. He was agreeably weary, without ambition: the strain under which he had existed for so long was relaxed. For the first time he realized how isolated a gambler was, a man cut off from humanity. A deep feeling of thankfulness rose, choking him at the throat; a sudden warm emotion blurred his eyes. What was it that had saved him? What had brought him up from the depths? It was like a miracle. At that first moment of escape it had seemed as though his base metal had been colored to gold. A welcome drowsiness settled over him, followed by profound sleep.

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RIDING to the slave market on the Washington road, Damaris Vaun talked with a pleasant and uninterrupted flow of words like the sound of the horses' hoofs in the dust. On either hand were old black gum trees, sycamores, and dark magnolias; the live oaks were hung with grey trailing moss. Beyond reached green savanas and the

cotton-fields; the heat of the day was over and the blossoms were open, tender white and rose and dark violet. The fallen petals were violet and crimson. The cotton hands were leaving the fields, the women bright moving patches of color, coming in to the scaffold yards. There were soft staves of song. Laughter and long calls. They stopped at a number of buildings of rough boards; saddle-horses were outside, held by servants; within, the proprietor, John Ackles, greeted them cheerfully. "This is my friend Isaac Cordes, from Connecticut," Vaun proceeded; "he lost his servant the way any gentleman might on the River and I brought him here to see if you could supply him with another."

They were in the narrow courtyard formed by the low buildings; negroes were playing quoits, fiddling, talking, or asleep, and Ackles shouted for them to assemble. The men stood in a line, from the older, the taller, to the youngest. They were dressed alike in roundabouts and trousers of coarse corduroy; they had black fur hats, and vests, white cotton shirts, and practical shoes. Vaun and Isaac Cordes walked down the line critically. "There's one, Mr. Vaun," Ackles specified. "Juba, step out here." A young man with steady hazel-colored eyes and a clear light-brown skin moved forward. "That's the best boy I've had in my place for months," Ackles assured them. "He was Colonel Edward Burlette's servant — you'll remember him, Mr. Vaun — in Baton Rouge. The Colonel died and the ladies came on bad times. He's right expensive, though. I have to get nine hundred dollars for him."

Damaris Vaun was conducting the affair. "Open your

mouth wide," he commanded the negro. "Let me see your hands." He nodded. "Roll up your sleeves. Juba, are you used to taking care of a gentleman's wardrobe?" Yes sir, the slave said, he was. "Of course he's high," Vaun told Cordes; "but he looks exceptionally good. I wish I could afford him." The slave-dealer moved forward. "Mr. Vaun, he's better than he looks. If Mr. Cordes isn't satisfied he can always bring him back . . . any time in the four months."

"You had better take him that way," Vaun advised Isaac Cordes. "Mr. Ackles, Mr. Cordes is prepared to pay in gold, since he is new to Natchez, but we don't want anything unfriendly like that. If necessary I'll go on his paper. At present he's at the Mansion House." That, Ackles quickly replied, was absolutely unnecessary. He asked Mr. Cordes, however, if he would send back the clothes the boy stood in. It wasn't customary, Cordes remembered, for negro servants to wear the dress of the slave market. A chorus of good-natured exclamations rose from behind Juba. He was lucky to sell so quick. It was plain he had found a good master who would keep him in rich coats. Wouldn't the other gentleman buy a house servant from Virginia? A Virginia nigger who had always served the best blood there was.

Isaac Cordes rode back to Natchez alone; he had arranged for Juba to come the following morning. The cotton-fields, in the last of the daylight, were luminous, the savanas dark. The plantation-houses, set far back in their groves, showed the glimmer of their candle-lighted windows. After supper Isaac Cordes returned to the esplanade. A broken and disused brick aqueduct lay across

the face of the town and, over the small wooden bridge at the street's end, he entered the narrow and magical and green region where he had first found peace. It was too dark to see if the girl was again in the garden, but he thought of her there, under the arcades of yellow roses doubly sweet in the night, following the walks between flowering orange trees. The faint but clear and evil sounds of the Landing rose to the top of the Bluff, and Cordes thought of her as an angel on the silver clouds of heaven, high above the crowded pain of hell.

His mind was filled with happy pictures and thoughts: the negroes playing the fiddle and slumbering in the slave market; the arrival of Juba in the morning; Damaris Vaun's warm generosity of manner; the good-natured intimate clamor at the ordinary in the Mansion House. He wanted desperately to be a part of it, to consult with the young judge, stand with Vaun and Cosmus Gibbes and the others on the sidewalk. However, he must avoid all signs of such desires: his safety in this new life depended on the independence of his bearing and acts.

When Juba arrived he accompanied him to stores where appropriate clothes were bought. The servant asked for a small ironing-board and iron for Isaac Cordes's shirts and ruffles, and additional small purchases — the accessories of a gentleman's habit — were made. With this Cordes began to have a recognized place in the town; a score of men greeted him at dinner and on the streets; the cashier of the Agricultural Bank made him a visit in the evening at the Mansion House; his opinions, as a widely traveled man and experienced, were required. He was absolutely contented. In the morning, now, Juba

brought his coffee and the hot water, and laid out his razors. The servant, he discovered, had a serious and quiet disposition; he was religious and attended to his slight worldly duties in a deep abstraction. He performed them, though, to Cordes's entire satisfaction.

It was Juba's habit to sing under his breath; he had an exceptionally true and vibrant voice, and the room would echo softly with the name of Jesus. There would be no need, when Jesus came, to mourn or weep. Isaac Cordes liked the singing, it added to the soothing calm of Natchez and his new life. He began to think of religion, old memories of the miracles and promises of the Bible returned to him.

In the center of the town there was a neglected burying-ground; its aged broken headstones and overgrown paths crowned a rise; streets were cut through it with bricked walls; and, standing in the midst of its tranquillity, Isaac Cordes could hear the quick-echoing beat of horses' hoofs, the turning of wheels, the crack of the carters' whips, in the narrow trottoirs. He had walked there from the hotel, after dinner; it was Saturday afternoon, and the sunny heat was musical with the sounds of children's games, the passing voices of horseback riders. There were some trees in the burying-ground, a tangle of vines and wild flowers and sweet grasses; an air of infinite remoteness and repose. It seemed to be a world in itself where Isaac stood alone. The other world — Natchez and the River and the vast forests of Louisiana — looked to have fallen a great distance away. He was as high above it as the sky was high above the earth.

A strange feeling, a deep emotion, possessed him, and

he automatically said aloud the word God. The emotion in him increased to a sharp and beautiful pain, a pain that was a dread and a dread that became an ecstasy. It was God who had saved him, who, in His infinite mercy, had reached down to the River, to the steamboat Ramapo, and raised him to a golden paradise. Tears of gratitude and humility streamed over Isaac Cordes's thin cheeks. Among the bright weeds he fell on his knees in a prayer that was all passionate gratitude and no words. Presently he got up and dried his face. His happiness had increased a hundredfold. The soft cries of the children at play were the singing voices of angels. His heart like his room at the Mansion House was filled with Juba's mellow proclamation of his Savior.

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All the facts of his life, which had seemed to be no more than the accidents of chance, took on a dignity of meaning — he had been a blind part of the sinfulness of the world and his eyes had been opened. The Lord had lifted him, the least of His creatures, into eternal light. He was filled with a childlike impulse of acknowledgment. The declining sun flooded the esplanade with a warm glow even more golden than usual. The courthouse bell was ringing, warning the slaves, at four o'clock on Sunday afternoon, to leave the town and return to their masters. A small group of negroes was standing under a tree, and a man started to leave, when an insinuating and derisive laugh called him back. Isaac Cordes saw Doctor Polidore's quadroon woman. It disturbed him to find her

planting the seeds of iniquity in his place of divine blessing and he rose from his customary bench.

"It's four o'clock," he told her, "and you must hurry to get down to the Landing before it is too late." The men with her fell away with obeisances, their hats off, but the quadroon gazed at him with an insolent composure. Doctor Polidore, she replied, was not in a hurry to see her just then. Cordes's manner hardened. "Where is your piece of paper?" he demanded. "Show me your permission to be around." She declared that she had lost it. The negro men had hurriedly left. "Go down to the hotel at once," he commanded her. "If you are caught like this in Natchez the town will give you thirty-nine lashes."

She stood facing him, silent but with contemptuous lips, resentful eyes; and he turned abruptly away. Soon afterwards Damaris Vaun joined him. "What I had to say to you was this," Vaun began immediately: "You have seen something of Natchez and the country around it, you have seen me, and we have seen enough of you to know you might be one of us. Cordes, we, I, should like you to be. In this way: I want to buy a cotton plantation, it's a little difficult for me right now, and I'd like right well if you were with me. It's not as expensive an undertaking as it sounds. We shouldn't need more than twenty-five hundred dollars to begin, and that would be principally for building; we'd get the land and niggers on credit; field hands would cost us about six hundred dollars apiece. A good acre, Isaac, will make near two bales of cotton, and a good nigger will pick seven or eight bales a season, and we'll get around fourteen cents a pound. We ought to pay off two-thirds of our notes the end of

the first year and buy ten or twelve more niggers. The third year it would be practically all paid in, and the fourth we'd own a valuable property and maybe thirty hands. Thirty hands would show a profit of eleven thousand dollars."

Isaac Cordes didn't answer at once; he couldn't — what Vaun offered him surpassed all his dreams of earthly contentment. It held out to him the stability of peace he had hungered for. He would be able to stay close to Natchez, in the safe happiness of a plantation-house under protecting live oaks, for the rest of his life. Finally he replied, very quietly: "That would be suitable to me. As you know, I have the money in the bank here. I have more, too, away. I'll get it." It was evident that Damaris Vaun was delighted. His plans followed each other in a swift verbal succession. "You can live on the plantation, but I had better keep hold of the law for a little yet. We'll see Ackles tomorrow about the niggers and then go to the Agricultural Bank." He went on and on and Isaac Cordes's sense of comfort and security increased. The wild blended sounds, the menace, of the Landing were scarcely audible. Vaun abruptly rose.

"We must tell my family about this," he declared. "Only an uncle is left in Natchez — James Alawayes and his family. They are not far. Just up on our right." On their right was the mansion of Cordes's great admiration. A feeling of unreality accompanied him in the sweetness of the gardens; the cordiality that greeted him through Damaris Vaun left him breathless. He was presented to a slim pale girl, a girl like a tea-rose, with her arms bare. She walked with him by the orange and lemon trees. They

stood under the oleanders. The feeling of unreality increased in Isaac Cordes — the girl beside him was too delicate for actuality. In the darker dark of the arbors he was afraid that he would lose her completely. Even the perfume of the night, he imagined, must lie heavily on her.

Her voice, too, was slight, like a sigh; like a silver vapor. He said almost nothing. When they had left, Damaris Vaun said frankly that, while his cousin Mary Alawayes was a lovely creature, she didn't ensnare him. "Too thin," he added brutally. Cordes didn't reply. Mary, Mary Alawayes! A name musical with heavenly quantities. Oh, decidedly she was more of heaven than of the world. Damaris Vaun couldn't perceive that; he was too thoughtlessly young, too much under the tyranny of the flesh. But she was the crown of Isaac Cordes's golden vision.

He thought of her as incorporeal, a thing of spirit in a transparent and momentary body, hardly more tangible than a faint sound of flutes, no more physical than the scents of the roses that surrounded her. Isaac Cordes thought of her with adoration and without desire. The details of his coming arrangement with Vaun happily occupied him as well; he was amazed at the simplicity with which his future life in Natchez had been arranged. He was, in effect, a cotton planter; soon he would be riding into town with a wide-brimmed hat and tie his horse in front of the bank. He'd carry a thin whip and be a part of the familiar talk at the ordinary in the Mansion House. And sometimes, in the evening, he would go to the Alawayes's and walk in the gardens there with Mary. Some of this he communicated to Juba:

"Juba, Mr. Vaun and I are going to buy a plantation

together. I will live on it while he continues for a while at the law." Juba was glad of this. Mr. Vaun was a gentleman of high birth. "I'll have to learn a lot about cotton, and you'll have plenty to do. I won't have a housekeeper, I think, but make you in charge of that. I'll have to depend on you, Juba, a great deal. I've seen the land Mr. Vaun has in mind. It's not far beyond the ruins of Fort Rosalie on the South road. Hardly more than a half-hour by horse from town. We shall have to build a plantation-house and quarters and put up the scaffold yard and gin. There will be a lot of clearing necessary at first, too. Brush and vines and other trash. But it isn't really wild. Not really, Juba.

"We ought to be fixed by Christmas, with a wild turkey for dinner. Juba, the Lord provides for the faithful and those who acknowledge Him." Juba said amen and glory. "Yes, Lord," Juba intoned; "for the faithful." It was morning, approaching noon; they were in Isaac Cordes's room in the Mansion House; and a servant knocked at the door and entered. Mr. Vaun was outside and wanted to see Mr. Cordes very special. That was strange, Cordes thought; Damaris Vaun had planned to go out to their prospective land immediately after breakfast and then continue down the River on an errand of law. "I'll come at once," he replied. As he left he was followed by the dark ecstatic voice of Juba singing about the glory of the Promised Land.

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Damaris Vaun was waiting on the gallery of the hotel; it was clear that he was disturbed, for he kept hitting at the floor with his riding-whip. "I didn't want to see you about this, but I had to," he proceeded. "After all, it's only the talk of the negroes. Mr. Cordes, it seems that Houce, a servant of mine, knows a yellow girl down at the Landing. He was on the esplanade with her this Sunday evening, and they saw you. It's ridiculous, of course, but she told him you were a River gambler and that your name in reality was Sylvester Dering. She said you had left the River for a while until some trouble about a death was over. All you have to do is assure me, as it can't be, that this isn't true. God knows I wouldn't hear such a thing from an ordinary nigger; but Houce is a serious man; he has been with us a long time."

Isaac Cordes gazed intent and silent into Damaris Vaun's face; a greatly increased affection for Vaun possessed him; he loved him and he pitied him for his insensibility to God. What, Cordes wondered, had God in store for him? He had been exalted with pride and the vanity of earthly happiness. The peace of heaven wasn't so easily, so cheaply, found. "Mr. Vaun," he replied, "everything your negro told you is true. I was on the River and my name was Sylvester Dering. But there is this difference — I left the River forever. My life is as new and changed as my name."

A slight flush gathered under the dark skin of Vaun's face. "Am I to understand," he demanded, "that you came up to Natchez and with a false name and pretenses deliberately took advantage of our hospitality?" It had the look of that, Cordes admitted. He owned no impulse

to defend himself. He had a numbing feeling that God was speaking in the voice of Damaris Vaun. "It didn't appear to me that I could do you any harm," he explained briefly. "I asked you for nothing and I had nothing to offer you."

"Harm!" The other echoed him sharply. "Do you suppose it is our habit to associate with gamblers and assassins from the River? What, sir, I specially resent is the fact that you permitted me to introduce you into Mr. Alawayes's house. He has a right to think very badly of me. If it hadn't been for that I could have managed to ignore you, after ordering you out of town." Isaac Cordes knew what would, what then must, follow. It would be impossible for him. He couldn't fight a duel. Vaun asked: "Is there anyone at the Landing half fit to act in an affair of honor?" Isaac Cordes admitted that he couldn't answer. "It won't be necessary to find out. I won't meet you that way, Mr. Vaun."

Damaris Vaun's anger rose. "I thought River rats like yourself fought at every opportunity," he replied. "It was that reputation which made me offer you a duel. It was possible you might believe I was afraid of you." He was silent, gazing down at the short space between them. Isaac Cordes told himself that his lies had found him out. Beyond the slender posts of the gallery the tranquil yellow noon blurred in his sight. It was a beautiful place. Vaun, he could see, was troubled. He abruptly repeated his challenge. "No, Mr. Vaun," Cordes said. Suddenly he felt a brutally sharp quick pain across his face — Vaun had slashed him with his riding-whip; he hit him again, and then stood regarding him with a congested fixed stare.

Isaac Cordes threw up his arm to hide the shame of the

blows; blood was spreading down over his face. Other men were gathering around them. Damaris Vaun explained stiffly: "He isn't Isaac Cordes, but Dering, a River gambler. Yes, on his own confession. I offered him a chance, but he refused."

In Isaac Cordes's room Juba, with a basin of water, helped to remove the blood. Cordes was deeply cut, twice, across the left cheek and nose; it would be necessary, he saw, to have a doctor. He felt faint and sick. Later, his face curiously muffled and bound, he stood at a window looking out across the gallery into Main street. There was a constant stream of carriages from the plantations and planters on horse with white coats, wide white hats, and whips. Once he had thought to be a part of that desirable procession, a planter with a house with a colonnade under the aged branches and moss of live oaks. Negroes in the cotton-fields, among the rose and white blossoms, the dark fallen petals. He saw now how hopeless that vision had been; impossible but miraculously beautiful. Lovely with peace.

In a little while he would leave it forever —the burying-ground where he had found God, Main street with its imposing brick blocks, the bank in which he was no longer a depositor, Fort Rosalie crumbling amongst its flowers, the green and shaded esplanade high above the sinful current of the River and of life. All the while he had been there, he remembered, the sounds of the Landing had mocked at him and threatened him. He called Juba.

"Juba, I'm going where I can't take you. I am leaving you behind, but I'm not uneasy about you. You have

seen the light of the face of the Lord. I thought about freeing you, but it would be a mistake. A free negro is more often wretched than not. I am sending you to Mr. Damaris Vaun to be his servant."

When he was alone again, his room had begun to darken, but the town was bathed in a transcendent tide of light. The carriages had mostly gone; the street was practically empty. It was at this hour that he had usually gone to the esplanade. But he had seen Mary Alawayes later, in the full of the dusk. She was different from other girls, a spirit scarcely pinned to earth by her body. She was so fragile that he had been afraid of losing her in the gloom of the arbors of yellow roses. Where she walked, the ground was covered with pink bloom. He pulled the bell-rope sharply: it was time to go.

The carriage taking him down to the Landing quickly reached the descent on the Bluff. For a moment the last of the sunlight touched him and then he sank into the gloom below. The Landing was waking up; there was a preliminary sound of fiddles, the streets were beginning to be crowded. An intolerable pain, a sense of irreparable loss, struck at his heart. Isaac Cordes was gone . . . Sylvester Dering had returned to the River. He drove directly to the levee: the steamboat Eagle was ready to depart down the River to New Orleans. She was tied in close and he stepped on board, keeping his bag from the clamoring importunities of the negro stevedores. There was a surge of water under the paddle-wheels; and the Landing, the Bluff, and Natchez, fell away.

The mate of the Eagle stopped and spoke to him in a cold respectful curiosity; there was an audible whispering,

an exaggerated attention of admiration, among the negroes; passengers marked him with lowered comments. The steamboat throbbed hurrying down the dark shining River. The supper bell rang, but Sylvester Dering remained on deck. He wasn't concerned with mortal viands. When the tables had been cleared away he stopped in the entrance to the crowded main salon. He breathed almost in a gasp and then moved forward one pace. "Friends," he said. He waited. "Friends, there is a land above flooded with a golden light. A land of everlasting security. It is far above us, the road is narrow and steep and blind with dust, but it can be traveled if your hearts are steady. It is a beautiful land where the ground is covered with flowers; the white mansions of the blessed stand in a green and shaded peace; and the fields are white with the plenty of the Lord. This is a true testimony, friends, for, miraculous as it may seem, I have been there. I saw it with my own eyes. Then because of my sins I was turned away." His voice rose more strongly, colored with pity and the hunger for perfection. "We lost it, but it is ours and we must return to the presence of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.'

V.

FIVE

A YOUNG MAN riding with a somber face pulled in his horse at the Tchoupitoulas Gate. It was hot, a hot afternoon of early summer; the horse was dark with sweat and exhausted. An older individual, following Gaut Penny and leading a pack-horse, stopped silently beside him. On the right, against the River, a row of willow trees followed the Levee — there no more than a precarious strip of mud — and a vast array of keel boats, of chalants and sleds and Kentucky flats, was secured to the tree trunks. Below, luggers and pirogues with plank sails were fast to the river-bank. Negro women were buying hams and twist tobacco and greens directly from the flats and barges. On the left there was a dismal grey region, no better than a swamp, with footpaths made from the gunwales of broken-up boats, and small dismally isolated buildings. Gaut said to his companion:

"The Faubourg Ste. Marie." He had never been to Louisiana before. He recognized his surroundings from description. "And a good place for you to keep away from," he added. James Starin nodded. "I can see that from the citizens. There is nothing Spanish or French about them I can't understand. Ordinary Americans. Thirty years ago I might have needed advice; I wouldn't have taken it; but now you can save your words. I'm

fifty years old." He didn't show so many. Starin was thin and flexible; his face — like Gaut Penny's — was dark and hardened from exposure; but, unlike Gaut, his eyes were a clear and very pale blue. His lips were thin and humorous. He carried in his belt a strong bright knife and there was a long rifle in a sling by his leg.

Gaut Penny's black eyes were set wide apart, his hair — he had taken off his hat — was black and straight, his nose thin and slightly hooked; his cheeks at eighteen were hollow and there was a faint coppery glow under the skin. "My brother doesn't live in New Orleans itself," he continued; "he has a plantation above the city. But we had better go to the warehouse and ask. It is on Chartres Street near the Levee." A Spanish soldier, seated in the shadow of the military gate, waved an indifferent permission for Gaut to proceed. At once change surrounded him:

He was in a city of small yellow brick and wooden dwellings, with flat balconies of ornamental iron, set among tropical flowers and trees. There were avenues of magnolias and wide-spreading live oaks, groves of myrtles and cedars; the gardens and public squares were luxurious with pomegranates and roses and jessamines, blooming cactus and banana palms; the houses were veiled in a waxen foliage of orange trees white-starred with blossoms. Gaut saw window-ledges sweet with rosemary, starlings busy in willow cages, and intimate courtyards green with moss. Slight pale girls in brief calico were selling violets and cinnamon pinks; older negro women had their heads tied in red or orange tignons. There was a constant soft crying in French. Belles chandelles! Belles chandelles!

A patrol went up the Levee, here broad and paved with pounded oyster shells; the gens d'armes wore blue frock-coats with gilt lace, and cocked hats; they carried swords and flintlocks. Indian women, standing in the doorways, cried gombo filé and jambalaya and bière douce. The gombo filé was wrapped in large plantain leaves, and the beer kept cool in tubs. There were Acadians smelling of cattle. Humble Spanish merchants, Catalans, with hand-carts. Tow-headed Germans. Choctaws naked but for bright casual rags. Greek ice-cream venders in fezes. Everything, it seemed to Gaut Penny, was for sale on the streets — red and white candies, pralines, ginger cakes, live fowls, and meats and vegetables, charms and clothes and jewelry. James Starin pressed forward.

"I might be better back yonder. Where I would be at home. This isn't just the garden it looks like. Did you notice the canes on the Levee? Most of them are sword-canes. There is something about them you can tell. The nigger girls are too pretty and the air is too sweet to be comfortable. Just the same it's a paradise. A paradise with a twist." Gaut thought he understood what, vaguely, Starin was trying to express. Neither James Starin nor he was used to such an utter frankness of beauty. Philadelphia, the forest of Pennsylvania, were totally different. He was, through his father, a Quaker. But his mother was from Virginia — a Virginia Gaut with a strain of Indian blood. That was all as different as possible from New Orleans. Gaut didn't, he suddenly realized, know his brother, his half-brother, Gilbert Penny. Gilbert, who must now be thirty, had come to New Orleans more than ten years before, sent by their father in the interest of exporting

and trade, and he had married a Creole, Rosamunda de la Colina. Gilbert had not been home since.

Gaut had reached what, evidently, was the center of the city. A large square — it must be the Place d'Armes — was surrounded by an iron railing set in granite; on either hand were long rows of low brick buildings, stores; at the back there was an unfinished church and a cabildo with a pillory. The building with broad galleries on the River, he told Starin, was the State House. A flagpole in the square, the Spanish flag, rose above rank weeds, and along the railing there were booths, more merchants, more singing cries. He discovered, inquiring for the warehouse of Casimir Penny and Sons, that he had ridden too far — the Rue de Chartres lay behind him and a street from the River.

His father's name was painted above the entrance of a long building with an arcaded front. It was gloomy inside and cool. Gaut asked for his brother. A clerk replied in Spanish, Gaut Penny was at a loss, and he went in search of an American assistant. Mr. Gilbert Penny only came into the city on Monday and Friday. This was Tuesday. The assistant's manner and words were adequate but no more. "Where is his plantation?" Gaut demanded. It was six miles above. By the McCarty plantation. "It would be better to tell me what you require." Gaut Penny said shortly: "I am his brother." That simple announcement created an instant amazement. "But how can it be!" the assistant protested. "We only had word yesterday that you intended to start south. Mr. Penny was certain you couldn't be here for a month at least." He stood in an attitude of profound hesitating incredulity.

"As you see, he was wrong." Gaut was increasingly

annoyed. He wasn't accountable to anyone in New Orleans for the day of his arrival. Certainly he had no intention of explaining his purpose there, the rate of his passage, to an inferior. Why the devil didn't the fellow direct him how to get to Gilbert's? "I will go on to the plantation," he said. "Of course," the assistant agreed. He became more active. "I'll show you myself. If you will wait till I get my horse. It's only in St. Anthony's Lane." The warehouse, Gaut thought, had an air of neglect. There were no signs of the activities of a commission brokerage. The Spanish clerk had disappeared. A negro in ragged blue cottonade lay sleeping in a corner. Gaut Penny crossed the earthen floor to an inner door — it was strapped with iron, with a great antique key — and pushed it open. Instantly he was enveloped in a close stench so incredibly vile that he instinctively drew back. A long, dark rectangle held a single glimmering light from an opening high on the brick wall. The air was so stifling, so corrupted, that he shut the door in a swift angry revulsion. He couldn't imagine why Gilbert permitted such a black filthy hole to exist. He, Gaut Penny, wouldn't have it for a minute.

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GILBERT PENNY's plantation-house was hidden from the public, the Coast, road, by a luxurious hedge of spiked Spanish-dagger; there was an avenue of pecan trees, tall and wide and shapely, formal patterns of orange trees and gay parterres; but the house itself, built of wood, was small and unimpressive. It was longer than wide, with a broad gallery across the face built on a brick perron. A

man came forward over the gallery. It was Gilbert. He exclaimed: "Gaut! We didn't expect you for weeks. How could we?" His surprise was touched with sharpness rather than pleasure. However, he immediately collected himself. "I had begun to think there would never be another Penny in New Orleans. You are welcome." He was older than Gaut had anticipated, a spare man with handsome features and hair already grey. Gilbert was dressed in white, but, in spite of his tropical garb and setting, he had the precise austere bearing of a Quaker.

"You must have flown down with the wild pigeons," he continued, descending the wide steps to the earth. Gilbert clasped Gaut's hand and patted his shoulder with his free palm. "You're big for a Penny," he added. "It's easy to see there is more Virginia than Pennsylvania in you." Gaut replied: "You mean more Indian than white. I hope you're wrong." How, Gilbert demanded, had he come South? Why hadn't he traveled by sea? The overland trip was very hard. Had he ridden to Pittsburgh and then floated down the River? But, of course, he hadn't. From Louisville to New Orleans alone, in a keel boat, needed three months. "I went by way of Washington to Richmond," Gaut explained; "then Raleigh and Columbia in South Carolina and through the Mississippi Valley. I was in a hurry. Can you take care of James Starin?" The elder brother laughed. "And a hundred more. You have a narrow conception of Louisiana plantations."

Gilbert Penny conducted him to a small barely furnished room. "New Orleans isn't Philadelphia," he explained; "all the best plantation-houses are like mine, all the rooms like this. Quite empty. Only our women are

luxurious. I suppose it's the result of the heat. We live almost entirely on the gallery. I'll send you hot water. Supper is usually at seven, but I'll ask Rosamunda to put it off an hour. You will be the first of my family to see her. Mariquita, her sister, is living with us; it's my guess you will be more than interested in her."

Gaut did not reply — he had no curiosity to see Mariquita de la Colina. Or any other girl, he silently added. Girls had not engaged him in Pennsylvania, and here his thoughts were even further removed from them. His thoughts were very serious. They were troubled. He couldn't understand Gilbert's attitude of almost painful surprise. There was, he felt, no actual warmth in his welcome. No cordiality. The stinking darkness at the warehouse returned to oppress him. Gilbert Penny and two women in lace were waiting on the gallery. One, slight and dark, clearly Spanish, was, he recognized, Rosamunda, Gilbert's wife. She held out an absurdly small hand, over which he bent. "I am glad you are here," she said, pronouncing the English words with obvious difficulty. Her sister was totally different: she was tall and graciously large, her hair was warm, auburn, and her skin at once evenly white and warm. She was the loveliest girl Gaut had ever seen. He had had no idea that such beauty existed. Mariquita de la Colina wore a necklace of topaz at her throat and there were topaz bracelets on her wrists. She didn't give him her hand to kiss.

He hadn't, Gaut reminded himself, come to New Orleans to be concerned with women, and he stood stupidly staring at her. Gilbert laughed. "You see, Mariquita, the power of your beauty never fails. It is really very

regrettable. I must warn you, Gaut, not to let your admiration appear at the balls in New Orleans. You would have a dozen duels the first night." Mariquita said indifferently: "He won't admire me at all. That will be splendid for everyone." Her English was better than her sister's. A divinely big girl. Indifferent. Contemptuous. Gaut's entire feeling about his presence in New Orleans, his brother, and his brother's house, had changed in an instant. It was a hundred times more exciting than before. A new eagerness of life and vitality animated him. Through supper, scarcely looking at Mariquita de la Colina, he was, nevertheless, possessed by her. He wasn't aware of eating, he answered his brother's questions at random, his formality with Rosamunda was mechanical.

At first he was amazed; Gaut was inclined to be rebellious; but he lost that at once. He said to himself: "She hates Americans. That is plain. She scarcely knows I'm here. Probably she is in love with a Creole. Engaged." At any minute he expected to hear Gilbert explain that Mariquita was about to be married. If he did say that, if she were, Gaut felt that a mere swallow of wine would choke him. Instead, supper was at an end. Gilbert Penny turned to him. "We will go out in my office where we can talk about all the things that brought you here in such a hurry. Rosamunda and Mariquita will forgive us." Gilbert said abruptly, when they were alone: "Well?" Gaut began with a seeming irrelevance. "You may not realize it, but I am eighteen." He stopped and frowned.

"I am eighteen and father has taken me formally into the family affairs. I hope you won't mind too much, Gilbert — he has sent me to New Orleans to be a partner with

you." The elder leaned sharply forward. "A partner!" he echoed Gaut. "But that is nonsense. Father has too much sense to make such a mistake. You can't really mean partner. At least not now. He has sent you down to learn the commission and exporting business in Louisiana. Some day you might be a partner." Gaut gazed at him without immediate reply. His confusion of mind about Gilbert turned into resentment. All his pride at his new importance, his pleasure in his father's trust, had been assailed.

"I have it in letters to you. Instructions," he said at last. He grew remote. Sullen. "What difference can they make?" Gilbert demanded. "How, in the name of God, can you come to a strange city, a foreign city, and in a minute be a partner with me? Father has no ideas of the difficulties here. Specially now. Yesterday we were Spanish and today we are French. Everything will have to be reorganized again. Laussat, the French Commissioner, hasn't been in New Orleans a month. The right of deposit for Americans has hardly been restored and he may withdraw it. We all know he is in favor of Louisiana for the French. The French exclusively." Gilbert was gesticulating excitedly; he had lost the appearance of a Quaker; he might have been Spanish. He gave Gaut no chance to speak.

"It's absurd!" he cried. "Why you haven't a word of French or Spanish. It will take you a year just to get around. A clerk, for the present, yes, but a partner, no." He stopped from sheer lack of breath. "You would have been right about the language once," Gaut replied; "a month ago that was important; but now it isn't. Soon there won't be any Spanish or French spoken at all. American will take its place. That is why I came, why I was

sent — everything we own in New Orleans is immensely more valuable than it was. The United States has bought Louisiana from Napoleon." Gilbert Penny half rose from his chair. An angry tide of blood mounted to his face. "You are crazy or you are lying," he asserted. "Everything you say is folly. I happen to know that Napoleon bound himself never to alienate Louisiana. If he did there'd be a war with Spain. There isn't a Creole on the Mississippi who wouldn't die before he agreed to such a disgrace."

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Gaut studied his half-brother curiously. "Disgrace," he repeated; "we didn't realize in Philadelphia it was disgraceful to be American. We were all rather cheerful about the Louisiana purchase. Specially since we had really an important branch here. I'll get my papers if you like." The elder nodded. When Gaut Penny returned with the written instructions from Pennsylvania he found Gilbert absorbed in frowning thought. "I was surprised," he admitted; "you appeared so suddenly from home that you brought back my bad manners. The manners in New Orleans are faultless. Gaut, we must forget about our common affair for the present, the immediate present. You have come to the gayest city in America, perhaps in the world, and you must see it and enjoy it. Laussat is having a ball tomorrow night, he has the Bernard Marigny house below New Orleans, and that will be your introduction. Rosamunda and Mariquita will see that you meet all the charmers, but I believe Mariquita is supposed to be the most beautiful girl here."

Gaut made a slight gesture of assent; it was actually an acknowledgment of what Gilbert said about his sister-in-law. No one, of course, could compete with her. It was evident that Gilbert Penny wanted to be alone, and Gaut went to his room. His thoughts were horribly confused. Mostly they were concerned with Mariquita de la Colina. He felt that he must come to some immediate conclusion about his attitude toward her. He wondered, seated at a window without sash or glass, what love really was. He wasn't, naturally, in love with Mariquita so quickly: he only recognized her extraordinary beauty. She was so beautiful that his recognition was impersonal; there was no place for an individual and peculiar emotion. She was so perfect, he told himself further, that he couldn't be in love with her; it was a natural appreciation. He couldn't, for example, imagine her being in love with him. In the first place, he saw that Gilbert's whole house was antagonistic to Americans. Mariquita had been specially remote. Her flawless bearing, her perfect courtesy, simply made it worse. Faults and not perfections brought individuals together. His pride was engaged. He could never, he silently asserted, give his allegiance to anyone who withheld it from him. This was not admirable. Particularly it had nothing to do with love. Love was a free uncalculated gift. However, he couldn't help what at bottom he was—difficult to the point of suspicion. Sullen. Vain was a better description.

At once he told himself that, where Mariquita was concerned, he would be totally indifferent and continued to dwell on her pale full loveliness. Dancing with her at the ball given by Laussat, the French Colonial Prefect, he was cold in manner and freshly, absolutely, overcome.

Gilbert, after their first conversation, had avoided all mention of serious affairs. As he had promised he turned Gaut over to the women of his family. He had, at the Marigny house, made one exception — he presented Gaut to Daniel Clark, the acting American Consul. Clark's bearing was studiously light and pleasant. He, too, avoided any serious references. After a week in New Orleans Gaut would be a fervent Creole. He would never again return to the rigors and harsh existence of the North. New Orleans was a city for the young, where life was enjoyed. No one worked hard here. It wasn't necessary. It wasn't, in fact, wise. The climate was antagonistic to labor. The niggers, Daniel Clark asserted, did the work for everyone.

Gaut Penny made a brief reply. Clark, it seemed to him, was almost exactly repeating his half-brother's attitude and words. In consequence he had an instinctive dislike for him. Daniel Clark, he felt, regarded him as an ineffectual boy. Gaut turned with pleasure to Mariquita. She was always surrounded by young and ardent and elegant men. They all gave the impression of laying themselves at her feet. They were at once passionate and restrained. She danced with him again and then again, a miraculously lovely impersonality. In an intermission one of the younger men he had met begged for the privilege of a few words on the gallery; and, following him, Gaut found a small group waiting. One stepped forward.

"It's natural you have forgotten my name," he said in admirable English; "I am Antonin Déjan. This is Garidel jeune, this Pierre Hazeur, this Zénon Fortier, then little Derbigny, Joseph Lauve, Manuel Cagigol, young Expeleta, Lopez do Solano and Don Felipe Alston. We are,

to make it as clear as possible at once, some of the devoted slaves of Mlle. de la Colina. If we were all here you would have the entire corps of gentlemen available in Louisiana. Now, M. Penny, what we have to say is this — we cannot see with calmness any new assault on the heart of Mlle. de la Colina. We are not calm where she is concerned. We have no wish to be. Every one of us, of course, has offered himself to her, and we will continue offering ourselves until one is supremely rewarded. Figure to yourself, then, our feeling. You appear overnight among us. You are Gilbert Penny's brother. It is evident, we all agree, that you are by nature one of us. You live with Gilbert. You see Mariquita every day. Unfairly, we think. I beg you — what is our course?"

Gaut Penny didn't know. "I don't know," he said bluntly. He was at once affronted and complimented, flattered. "I am afraid," Déjan went on, "that our situation is serious. We must act seriously. M. Penny, I am burdened with nine challenges. This with my own makes ten. It seems to be a great many. We are ashamed of ourselves, but the fact remains." A younger man, scarcely more than a boy, with a good-natured amusing face, stepped forward. "It is a little more difficult than Antonin has explained. I admit that at once. Since you are the one challenged, the right of weapon lies with you. We know very little about the habits of North American gentlemen. Would you be so good as to tell us how and with what your affairs of honor are settled?"

"Certainly," Gaut replied. "I come from Philadelphia, where there is still the forest. Lenni Indians. We borrow our customs from them. In Philadelphia gentlemen fight

with tomahawks." He paused. "You see," his interrogator turned to his familiars. "In Philadelphia gentlemen settle affairs of honor with tomahawks; that is to say, with hatchets; and for one I'll admit our situation is grave. The truth, M. Penny, is that we do not comprehend the hatchet. Not fully. There are aspects of the duel with hatchets we have not explored. Would you restrain yourself if I suggest that to us the hatchet is barbarous? I say that without a grain of reflection on your courage or breeding. Could one of us, just one, M. Penny, persuade you to accept the foil?"

"No," Gaut answered with an appearance of entire frankness. "I couldn't change to the foil. There are aspects of the foil I am strange to. I couldn't do it justice. But with the tomahawk you will be pleased." Someone murmured: "I doubt it." There was an entire general good humor. Antonin Déjan proceeded: "Unfortunately we cannot force you into the position of challenging us. That would be detestable. Felipe, you are a great favorite with Mlle. de la Colina, you have given us many unhappy moments, perhaps you will meet M. Penny with tomahawks." Felipe replied in French, Gaut missed the exact shade of his words, but in tone they sounded remarkably like the permission for Antonin Déjan to go to hell. There was an immediate decision, however, in favor of more bottles of champagne. None of them saw Mariquita again that night. Gaut had a tremendously good time; he was universally named Thomas Hatchet, the Philadelphia butcher boy.

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A PERIOD of gayety began for Gaut Penny — the immediate life Gilbert had recommended — without any reference to his serious purpose in New Orleans. He was constantly with the younger Creole gentlemen formally attached to Mariquita de la Colona — a small organization founded like an exclusive club on her charm. He acquired a rapid comprehensive knowledge of New Orleans: they lounged about the Artillery Park for parade; dined in the fashionable houses on the Bayou road; the names of the streets became familiar to Gaut — Magazine and the Rue de la Briqueterie, the Street of Pigeons, the Cours du Cirque and Calaloa. He brought superior Macouba tobacco from Bidetrenoulleau in the Place de l'Église; liquors from Laplanche; lotions and pomades from Mme. André on the Place d'Armes, where Mariquita purchased her tablets of rouge. He was solemnly conducted to Regnier, the fencing-master, in the hope that he could be brought to relinquish the tomahawk traditional to Philadelphia honor. He promenaded the Levee, the Grand Chemin, through the cool of the evening in wide white linen trousers and a blue tunic, a broad planter's hat, surrounded by a vivacious chatter of French. Gaut gambled until morning in the Maison Coquet; he drank chocolate and played dominoes for Spanish gold at the Café del Aguila, on St. Ann Street; he drank in Turpin's cabaret and at the Le Veau qui tête; he developed a fondness for le petit gouave, the celebrated drink conceived by Thiot.

He liked his companions immensely — the comedy which introduced them to him had no actual bearing on their instant willingness to engage in serious duelling; their courage was marked, their grace of bearing and

speech were delightful. Gaut Penny was silent rather than not; the Creoles, he thought, talked too much; they were too excitable, at once hopeful and apprehensive. Their vanity, no greater than Gaut's, was totally different — their self-opinion insisted on the recognition of a thousand small niceties of attitude and contact. Gilbert, he discovered, was wrong about their bearing toward the United States: there was no promise of enmity; instead he found a complete indifference to all the rest of America. He avoided, following the recommendation of his father, any public reference to the purchase of Louisiana by the United States. It was Casimir Penny's desire for his sons to buy as much lumber, control as many facilities, as they could manage before the announcement of a changing government. Naturally all values in Louisiana would be enormously increased.

Every day Gaut told himself that he must come to a final arrangement and understanding with Gilbert, but he continually put it off. This was not, primarily, because of his pleasures — it was connected, in a hidden way, with Mariquita. She bred in him an uncommon and rebellious indifference to sober fact. His scale of values, like the impending change in New Orleans, was changed, upset. The future, commerce, didn't greatly matter. Politics and nationality grew unimportant; Philadelphia seemed to be non-existent. Gaut drank more in a week than in all the previous eighteen years of his life. This was strange, since Mariquita de la Colina had no part in his excesses. She was always calm; she drank only a very little and very delicately; and she went constantly to church. Aside from that, and dancing, she seldom moved about. Mariquita

hardly ever appeared before noon and she vanished for the afternoon siesta. She appeared cool and formal, and divinely large, at supper; and, if they were home for the evening, she sat remotely on the gallery. She spoke to Rosamunda in Spanish and to Gaut, when it was necessary, in English. He could see that she was not a particle interested in him; he doubted if Mariquita ever gave him a thought; and he was, by turns, wretched and youngly indignant. He couldn't think of a way to engage her attention. When he spoke of Pennsylvania she made no further inquiries about it or his life there; she was evidently fatigued by any reference to his existence in New Orleans.

They were, on an evening when the scent of the orange blossoms was specially sweet, together on Gilbert's gallery, and Gaut Penny decided to neglect the customary Creole formality of speech. She was, after all, he reminded himself, a girl. More beautiful than any other, but still human. "Mariquita," he said, "if we were in Philadelphia I would be telling you how lovely you are." She gazed at him tranquilly. "That is done in New Orleans," she replied. "Differently," he insisted; "here it is words, a custom, but with us it would be more actual. I would make you understand how much I meant it. I do mean it, Mariquita. But I might tell you a thousand times and you'd still only think of words. It isn't, with me, a compliment. If that's at all clear to you. It is the way I feel. I am trying to explain that I'm in love with you." Apparently she hadn't heard him. "I said I was in love with you," he repeated; "I didn't ask you to have some claret. Love is a very important thing. It should be treated with dignity. After all, Rosamunda married an American."

"I am not Rosamunda," she reminded him. "Love is important to us. More important, perhaps, than to others. Gilbert is always absorbed in his affairs. Why should I talk about it to you? I have no impulse. You are a nice American boy, I can see that, but what has it to do with love? Can you tell me? You think you are in love, but it may be no more than the climate. Love can't be talked about, the truth is. That would be indelicate. I am only speaking because I want to end this now. You must never refer to it again. To me." He had an insane, a fatal, impulse to kiss her. "What would you do if I kissed you?" he asked. She told him. "I would have you killed." At last there was a trace of interest, of anger, in her voice. It vanished immediately.

"If I were older," he went on, "I'd act differently. Maybe I would kiss you and we'd see about the killing. I'm not entirely harmless. You think, because I am different from the men you know, that I can't feel deeply. That's because you don't understand me. I don't want to talk about love. You won't take what I say the way it's meant. I can't help it if I am young. It's not exactly a crime. Most of the Creoles who are your friends seem to me to be babies. They are brave, but it's better to be hard."

"You are hard," she admitted, gazing at him speculatively. "I had never thought of that before. But it is not a thing to be proud of. It would never make me love you. Never. I was wrong, partly, about your being a boy. Gilbert told me there was Indian in you. That, I suppose, would make you secretive. Well, I hate secretiveness. Candor is the trait of a gentleman." She spoke evenly,

calmly; her voice was an endless delight. Gaut's voice grew sharper. "If you only love pralines you are right. We could never agree. I'd hate to think you were so — so young. Candies! You are so beautiful it's impossible to discover the truth about you. It might be an unfortunate discovery. It is evident Rosamunda has character, but perhaps you have none. You only sleep and dance and have nice manners. None of that is very impressive. When you think of it."

"Don't," she advised him. "It will be useless." He was furiously angry. "How do you know?" he challenged her. "You may fall in love with me. It's not entirely ridiculous. As you seem to think. There is a lot you don't know about . . . New Orleans. You are going to be rather unpleasantly surprised." A part of that at least, she replied, would be an unpleasant surprise. "You mean the part about loving me," he went on moodily. "Anyhow, I'm going to ask you to marry me." She didn't answer. "Mariquita, will you marry me?" Mariquita de la Colina shook her head slightly. "You always give me a headache," she explained.

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In his room, alone, Gaut Penny's bravado evaporated. He was heavily depressed. It was probable that he had destroyed what slight interest in him Mariquita de la Colina might have had. He saw no chance of ever being successful with her. He was startled by the fact that, wholly serious, he had asked her to marry him. That hadn't been premeditated. It had come out spontaneously.

But he meant it more than he had ever meant anything before. Of course, there was no hope. He understood that. However, his understanding had nothing to do with his desire. His need. Gaut couldn't even picture the happiness of being married to Mariquita. It was too utterly fantastic; yet it persisted at the back of his mind. He became once more practical — at any day the purchase of Louisiana might be published, and then Casimir Penny and Sons would lose the enormous advantage of a previous knowledge.

He found Gilbert in his office on the plantation and demanded an immediate attention to his purpose in New Orleans. Gilbert now adopted the attitude of addressing a mere boy. "I haven't had time to take up my father's letters," he said; "but when I do I must tell you it will make no difference in my decision. I am willing to accept you as a sort of land supercargo, you can have a chance to learn the commission business in Louisiana, under the French Government, but no more for several years. I can't think how you influenced the office in Philadelphia into giving you such absurd pretensions. About the other, the sale to the United States, that, of course, is all empty rumor. Daniel Clark has heard nothing of it; I haven't even thought it worth while to ask Laussat. He would see in me a crazy man."

As his speech progressed, Gaut felt more and more coldly solid. He began to view Gilbert as ineffectual. "It won't matter what you decide," he replied evenly; "father is the one to say what will happen. I don't, really, understand you at all. You are so violent. You might have been taking money from the firm drawer. God

knows you haven't sent much North the last two years. You haven't destroyed the books, have you?" Gilbert's anger turned cold. "You are taking advantage of your position in my house," he said stiffly. "It is necessary for me to forget you are my brother. My half-brother, to be exact. Since my duties of hospitality have, I think, been excused, I'll admit that there is no place for you in New Orleans. You only make it uncomfortable in my house. Rosamunda does not understand Americans, and Mariquita, I believe, has been seriously annoyed by the way you force yourself on her. In Louisiana tactics like yours are neither comprehended nor welcome."

"What are you going to do about the instructions from father?" Gaut demanded. "It's of no importance what you and your wife and her sister think about me. It isn't necessary for me to stay in your house. The truth is I'd rather not. It isn't impressive, either, what you believe about the purchase of Louisiana. In a few weeks it will all be plain to you; and then it will be too late for us to use our advantage. We were to spend two hundred thousand dollars. But when you recover from your insanity it will be worth no more than any other money. What is more, if you have a taste to forget our relationship, don't remember it on my account. I mean if it occurred to you to take to a sword-cane. I'd damned well smack your face with it."

Gaut was, privately, enraged by Gilbert Penny's reference to Mariquita. He wondered if she had actually complained to Rosamunda about him. He thought not. That wasn't like what he had seen of Mariquita. Gilbert had made it all up. "I certainly won't brawl with you,"

Gilbert Penny told him. "I don't intend to let the situation between us become really serious. If you get to be a nuisance I will have you sent back to Philadelphia. Where you belong. If you're wise you'll keep on getting drunk and dismiss the rest. For the present. When I'm ready I'll speak to you. It might be a good thing for you to go to Cuba and learn something about the lower Americas. The rum in Havana, I am told, is exceptional." Gaut repeated stubbornly, "What are you going to do about your instructions?"

"Precisely and exactly nothing. In other words I must continue to use my own discretion. In our firm, I am the judge of conditions here. I have no objection to your staying in my house if you will follow the conditions I have laid out. I might say again that it is dangerous to annoy Mariquita. She is, at bottom, a Spaniard." He rose. "Thank you," Gaut replied; "for your invitation and your advice. It isn't my fault they are both worthless. The plantation is stupid and the women can go to the devil. I wouldn't have either of them. It's plain enough they have ruined you." Gilbert cried: "Take care!" Gaut Penny grinned at him. "I am not going to Philadelphia, though, and the rum in New Orleans is good enough. The question is beginning to be if I want you for a partner. I'm not certain I do. I'll have to let you know my decision. You might be useless under the laws of the United States. Anyhow you'd begin by cleaning out that stable you call a warehouse."

Gilbert stood looking at him with shadowed eyes. Then he turned definitely away. Servants were laying the table for supper, and Gaut sent for James Starin. "We

are going to move into the city," he explained briefly. "It is inconvenient here. Have the horses ready in half an hour." They proceeded to the Hotel de la Marine, near the old Market. Gaut had a room with a lofty ceiling and stone floor; there was practically no furniture, and long windows opened into an irregular court. The court and room were both damply cool; an exterior staircase led down from a wooden gallery; there was a murmur of pigeons and the splashing of women washing clothes at a well. Gaut sat somberly, putting off the moment for supper. He had an engagement, but owned no intention of keeping it. He had just realized that all his credentials, the papers from his father, were in Gilbert's charge. Gilbert was quite capable of destroying them. What, in God's name, was the matter with him? There was no reason for such bitterness. The only answer which occurred to Gaut was the one he had touched on. Gilbert might have been stealing his father's profits.

Gaut Penny didn't think so: Gilbert, at worst, wasn't so small. He had money in his own right. He would only be taking the money from one pocket to put it in another. Very well, then — what was it? Gaut couldn't think. His mind returned to Mariquita de la Colina. That, at any rate, was all over. He'd never see her again, except casually, at parties. At least his position in the social world she inhabited was firm. Gilbert couldn't affect that. He wasn't, Gaut had discovered, in spite of his long residence in New Orleans and friendly attitude toward the Creoles, popular. No one, naturally, made this plain to Gaut, but he was conscious of it. There was a tendency to speak of Gilbert and Daniel Clark together. Indifferently.

Gaut, however, was complimented for his incurable Americanisms; they were a source of endless entertainment to his familiar circle. He had been admitted to a full equality in the polite struggle for Mariquita's regard, taken into houses, affectionately introduced among families, to which Gilbert, married to Rosamunda de la Colina, would never penetrate.

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He conferred frankly with James Starin, who, born within sound of the Penny forge on Myrtle Creek, had always been attached to Gaut's family. James couldn't make anything out of their New Orleans situation. "You can't do a thing either," he pointed out. "Gilbert Penny has all the advantage there is. You had better wait until the announcement of the American purchase. Then some of them will stop calling you a liar." Gaut said still again that if he did that, it would result in serious loss. "No," he decided. "I am going to see Daniel Clark. He will have to recognize me." The American Consul lived on the Bayou Sauvage, back of the Bretonne Market; his house was more luxurious than most of the local habitations: it was surrounded by elaborate gardens, terraces of flowers, kiosks bowered in vines, statues, and orderly orchards. Gaut had already heard many doubtful rumors about him — he had built on the Bayou Sauvage in order to trade directly and safely with the Lafittes, who were pirates; he was in communication with strange black potentates in Santo Domingo; he was indifferent to American interests.

Clark was, however, impressively cordial with Gaut; he listened pleasantly, with sympathetic assents, to the great deal Gaut Penny had to say. "Gilbert spoke to me about all this," he acknowledged; "I must admit to you that my attention was affected by the nonsense it was largely based on. About Napoleon and the United States. That, of course, is ridiculous. It is impossible for a thousand reasons. Climate and nationality principally. I think I can be said to know Louisiana as well as most. I tell you Americans cannot live or prosper here. You have probably heard I am more Creole than not. The truth is I am the reverse of drawn to England. But that is enough of that. Now, the other — what you and apparently your father do not understand is that Louisiana isn't the United States; you can't, correctly speaking, have a branch of a Philadelphia business here. The laws for business are totally different from those in Philadelphia. What you have is this, a commission and exporting trade organized in what was Spain but has now become France. It is a separate undertaking. It may be called Casimir Penny and Sons, but, the fact is, it is Gilbert. Entirely, so far as France is concerned. He is responsible. No one in Philadelphia. In other words, I can do nothing for you. Except, certainly, in your capacity of a charming young individual. But there you seem very adequate. I have only the best reports of you." Gaut Penny asked:

"Did Gilbert show you my father's letters?" It hadn't been necessary, Clark explained; their contents had been too, well — too fantastic. "We had direct word of the sale of Louisiana from Hourquebie frères, our agents, at Bordeaux," Gaut informed Daniel Clark. "I can understand

you wouldn't act officially until you had official notice. I can't understand either your attitude or Gilbert's. It's nothing to you, naturally, but Gilbert is throwing away a lot of money and influence." Clark made no comment on this. "It was useless," Gaut told James Starin later. "Daniel Clark is so close to Gilbert that you couldn't get a knife between them."

Starin doubted that. A knife, he asserted, could be forced into a majority of situations. They were seated in Gaut Penny's room in the Hotel de la Marine; it was Friday, one of the days when Gilbert came into the city; and Gaut determined to give his brother a last formal warning. He would base his subsequent representations on that. He required James Starin to accompany him; but, James declared, they might as well have stopped in a tavern. The warehouse of Casimir Penny and Sons was closed, all the iron shutters were down and fastened, the door was blank and barred. In a sudden illogical temper Gaut kicked it. "Save your toes," Starin said. "There is an opening I noticed at the back. If you like we can take a look at that."

They followed a narrow passage between high walls, leading tortuously from the Grand Chemin to the warehouse. "It's curious," Starin commented; "when I was in here before, it was all grown up. Twice as thick. Now a path has been beaten down." The opening he led Gaut to was, as well, secured. James shook the door vainly; then he stopped; he held his ear against it. "What do you make of it?" he asked, straightening up. With his head pressed against the rough wood Gaut could hear a low restless murmur from within. It rose and fell, but never

stopped, like the echo of a hopeless, a lost, wail. Human voices, he was certain, composed it; but they were voices, accents, leaden words, he had never heard before. A sense of horror possessed him — the sounds were coming from the dark and incredibly foul room into which he had gazed.

"We'll get out of this," he said harshly to James Starin. Gaut stopped his companion at the first drinking-cabane. "I want a deluge of rum," he explained. "What was it?" Starin demanded. "My guess would be the opening to hell. I never listened to anything that put a fright in me so quick." Gaut didn't answer. He had paused in his drinking; he sat staring at the glass in his hand. What, among other things, had he heard about Daniel Clark? It had been in connection with a firm . . . Relf? Relf and Chew. Disreputable. Now he remembered: they imported West India negroes. It was a common belief Clark was in the African slave-trade!

Gaut Penny began, involuntarily, to laugh. Then he stopped, choked, painfully. Of course. But it was impossible. Gilbert! The United States, Gaut realized, had put an irrevocable stop to the importing of African niggers for sale. What did they call them in Louisiana? Bozoles. Probably the French would allow the trade. In select quarters. For Daniel Clark and the house of Casimir Penny and Sons. Gilbert, a Quaker Penny, running negro slaves from Guinea! That, beyond question, was what it came to. "Gilbert has changed the business," he said in a strained voice, "he is importing niggers." Starin recognized the truth of that instantly. "It will surprise your father," he declared. "Casimir Penny in the slave-trade!

Clark too." He leaned forward. "If I were you," he said slowly and with emphasis, "I'd be slow about making any announcement of your discovery. I'm not certain I would talk about it at all. The climate here is so unhealthy. If you ask me I'd say we might ride quietly off to Kentucky with profit to everybody."

Gaut Penny fell silent again. The wisdom of James's suggestion was obvious. He couldn't, for the present, accomplish anything in New Orleans. In a month, two months at most, the transfer of Louisiana must be acknowledged, and then Gilbert would have to escape as best he might. It was obvious he wouldn't keep command of the Penny affairs in New Orleans. That would be transferred to him, Gaut. He had only to go away, to Natchez, or into Kentucky, and wait. The serene beauty of Mariquita de la Colina rose in his memory. He would, by such a retreat, leave her finally. Forever. He had no chance with her now, he reminded himself; yet there was an inextinguishable flame of hope — perhaps it was only desire — within him. That, if he ran away for no more than a week, must die. Returning with the tide of Americans, progressive and ambitious and new, she would never again so much as glance at him.

"It would be the easiest thing to do," he agreed. "Reasonable. If I wanted to lose what we have, what the Pennys have, here. I don't. I can't do any good by staying and I can't desert my father's name. That is what it would amount to. Perhaps if there is a crash I can save a little by waiting." He avoided James Starin's quick glance: James had observed him with Mariquita. The older man shook his head doubtfully. "Speaking per-

sonally," he said, "I've been sitting in this Catalan hole since morning."

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THE following afternoon Gaut had arranged with Antonin Déjan to swim at the mouth of the Bayou St. John; and, with nothing else immediately to engage him, he drove out in a public gig. Déjan, with Zénon Fortier and Hazeur, was already in the water; together they swam out around the lighthouse. The Creoles were even more animated than customary, concerned with a ball Casa Calvo was giving that night. He was the commissioner sent by Spain to surrender Louisiana to France in the person of de Laussat; Casa Calvo, Sebastian de Casa Calvo de la Puerta y O'Farrill, had arrived in New Orleans less than a month after Laussat, and already, it was generally known, the two commissioners had had difficulties; yet it was understood that the Frenchman had accepted an invitation to the Spanish ball. "Will he go?" Pierre asked, turning on his back in the warm slack tide. "He will," Fortier asserted; "he is too correct to decline. It is only to be hoped that Burthe won't be at the Casa Calvos'." Burthe, the French Adjutant-General, he explained to Gaut Penny, was the cause of the diplomatic conflict. Laussat had even tried to land Burthe in jail. Aside from that, they decided, or because of it, the ball should be a notable occasion. Hazeur had heard that more than four hundred people were asked. There was to be tea — but champagne, really — at seven, a supper at midnight in a specially erected pavilion, and dancing until morning. He sang floating:

"Si to 'tit zozo
Et moi-même mo te fusil
Mo sré tchoue toi — Boum!"

Antonin and Zénon Fortier promised to stop for Gaut Penny on their way to Casa Calvo's. "Then," Antonin explained, "you can take no advantage of us with Mariquita de la Colina." They had, delicate in sensibilities, said nothing to Gaut about his changed residence. Gaut wondered how to proceed when he saw his brother's family. It wouldn't be easy. He must, he decided, for the present, entirely restrain himself where Gilbert was concerned. He thought of him, however, with a bitter contempt. Gilbert, he considered, had disgraced his trust, his family, and the country of his birth. Gaut decided to be wholly natural with Mariquita; he would dance with her, if she permitted it, as usual; as usual he was in the highest excitement at the chance of seeing her, of being with her, again.

At the tea, however, he couldn't even get a glimpse of Mariquita de la Colina; he began to be afraid she wasn't there. The crowd was enormous, though; he might well miss her until the dancing began. Burthe, the French Adjutant-General, was present, Gaut Penny saw; M. and Mme. de Laussat, a celebrated charmer, passed Burthe with a cold and studied unconcern. Joseph Lauve came up to Gaut. "Have you seen her?" he asked. There was no question, between them, to whom the her referred. "She is even more fatally divine than ever. In muslin, I think, embroidered rose muslin." Gaut Penny demanded further information, and, in search of Mariquita, left the principal

salon. He was, though, detained at the door. Laussat was bowing profoundly to the Marquis de Casa Calvo. Gaut, through the past days, had acquired a small understanding of French, and he gathered that Laussat was presenting his compliments and the compliments of his wife. Unfortunately they would be obliged to withdraw. Casa Calvo regretted such a necessity profoundly. Soon, however, he added, they would both be withdrawn, in the favor of the United States. Such a report had reached him, Laussat replied coldly. It was no more than an impudent falsehood.

Gaut's resentment of the loss Gilbert Penny's stubbornness was bringing about was so intense that when he came upon part of his circle — Expeleta and Manuel Cagigol, Lopez do Solano and Alston — at a bowl of fragrant rum punch he inattentively helped them to empty it. Proceeding on his original errand there was no doubt in his mind about the attitude to take with Mariquita. It should be firm. He had not been near firm enough in the past. She practically walked over him. It was no wonder, he was so weakly pleasant, that Mariquita disregarded him. Well, she would have to stop disregarding him. She would become an American soon and he saw no good reason why she could not start now. With him. Girls liked to be swept off their feet.

He had the extraordinary luck to find her seated, resting, by a bank of palms. "Joseph Lauve told me you had on rose muslin and that's how I knew you weren't a rose," he said at once. "Roses are beautiful, but they have thorns. The way to do is grasp them firmly." In illustration of this he captured her wrists. "At last we are

together again. We can dance." Mariquita gazed up at him with a tranquil disdain. "You are hurting me," she murmured. "And for nothing. I am not going to dance with you." In answer to this he dragged her up on her feet. "Don't be disagreeable," he advised her. "I am quite different from the Gaut Penny you first saw. I am, for one thing, firmer."

"You are drunker," she corrected him. "More than that, you are drunk. Let me go." He started to argue. He wasn't drunk at all. He'd had scarcely anything to drink. No more than a breath of weak punch. They could dance, and argue afterward. He had something of the greatest importance to say to her. "Mariquita, I want you to marry me. There is so little time to waste, it ought to be tomorrow."

"Let me go," she repeated. "I told you never to speak of marriage to me again. I should rather be an Ursuline nun. I should much rather be dead. The truth is, since you force me to tell you, that I detest you." He begged Mariquita de la Colina not to be absurd. "You don't detest me," he asserted. "It's interest. You don't understand. You are really very much taken with me. I have been a shade too pleasant. That is all." She smiled contemptuously; then she turned. "Gilbert," she said, "it is fortunate you are here. Your brother, who has been drinking too much, insists I must dance with him. I don't want to."

Gaut Penny stared arrogantly at his brother; his half-brother, he reminded himself. Gilbert said to him: "If you don't leave Casa Calvo's house at once, I will have you removed. I was a fool to let you stay in New Orleans. I will see you at the Hotel de la Marine tomorrow morning." Gaut, cold with rage, hot with assailed pride,

answered: "Good. You will be surprised. Or perhaps not. You may know more than you pretend. For example — that you are going to leave New Orleans instead of me. Well, you are. I hear that niggers are very plentiful in Santo Domingo. You damned hypocritical slave-driver."

Gilbert Penny's face was strained, his lips were tightly compressed. Gaut nodded toward Mariquita. "I suppose she was in it with you, all the cursed de la Colinas, the pride of Louisiana. You didn't think Godoy would sell you to Napoleon and Napoleon sell you to Jefferson. But that happened and now you're caught. You are ruined, Gilbert. You'd better dispose of our warehouse of niggers before word of it gets North. If Clark's wise he'll collect what little advantages he can right away. He's not going to last much longer, Gilbert; he will be out of favor in New Orleans with you." Gaut Penny swayed, then he held himself rigidly erect. "If you speak to me publicly," he told Gilbert, "I will have James Starin smack your jaw. Come to the hotel, as you suggested, where no one will see us together." He avoided any further notice of Mariquita. Gaut waited for Gilbert Penny to speak; the older man said nothing, and Gaut walked stiffly and unevenly away.

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A VARIETY of distressingly sharp pains had their residence in Gaut Penny's head, his throat was dry and his eyelids hot. James Starin sat in the Hotel de la Marine regarding him without visible enthusiasm. "So far as I can see," Starin asserted, "you got drunk and insulted practically

everybody. Now we don't know what will happen. I can guess it will be unpleasant. I ordered the horses. We can ferry across the Lake toward Kentucky or go back over the Coast road." He was, Gaut thought, taking a great deal upon himself. "I haven't decided what to do," Gaut Penny told Starin. "My brother said he would be here this morning." There was, at that precise moment, a knock on the door. A hotel servant entered. "There is a gentleman below for Mr. Penny," he said. "Don Lille Riano. It may be Mr. Penny doesn't recall him. He is a friend of Mlle. de la Colina's." Gaut turned to Starin.

"See him here," he advised. "From all you said I expect it's a challenge." In that case, Gaut commented, it would be very unusual to mention Mariquita de la Colina's name. A challenge originated from the immediate principal. Riano was older than Gaut expected; he was as old, obviously, as James Starin; a Spaniard with a tanned cheek, and clothes martial without being precisely military. His manner was formal. "I present myself," he announced, "on the account of Mlle. de la Colina. I was not at Casa Calvo's last night, but I gathered she was insulted, and that is enough. I am happy to be her admirer."

None of Mariquita's friends would have appeared for himself. The whole proceeding was clumsily wrong. It was, rather, a Quaker's idea of an affair of honor, the proceeding of a brawler at the Royal Barracks. "I never saw you with Mlle. de la Colina," he replied. "I never saw anyone with her who even looked like you. I must take it, then, that you are a liar." Riano's brown sinewy hand tightened on a thick bamboo cane. A gust of anger drove Gaut into further speech. "Go back to my brother,

unless you came from Mr. Clark, where you can be useful driving niggers." What followed was so incredibly rapid that Gaut Penny saw it only by inference: Riano dragged his cane apart, there was a limber flash of steel, and a bolt of light sang past Gaut's cheek. Riano half turned, falling on his shoulder, with Starin's knife in his throat. James Starin kicked the rapier at his feet. "Those colchemards are quite a trick," he said. "That one near to had you."

Gaut Penny's anger, his accumulated resentment, blinded him. He bent groping over the dead body, and there was a dull ripping, like the tearing of heavy linen. He spoke abruptly to Starin, and, almost at once, he was riding at a sharp trot toward the Tchoupitoulas Gate. Gaut Penny's gaze was set stonily in front of him, his lips were grey and hard, the copper in his skin was bright. He swept in to his brother's plantation and dismounted, without securing his horse, before the gallery. Gilbert and Rosamunda, and Mariquita de la Colina were seated at the early plantation dinner. Gilbert pushed back his chair. "Don't get up," Gaut told him. "I am not going to stay. A friend of Mariquita's, or of yours, came to the Hotel de la Marine this morning. He was very practical with a sword-cane. So practical that we had to kill him. I brought you something to remember it by." Gaut Penny flung on the dining-room table, beside a silver bowl of orange blossoms, a sodden and bloody scalp. The long wet black hair spread over the white damask.

"You have always reminded me that I was an Indian," he cried; "there is proof you are right. Only the chance that you were a coward, that you preferred to pay for

your murders, kept it from being yours." Rosamunda Penny sat with her hands on the edge of the table, her eyes dilated and fixed. Mariquita's eyes were half closed; she breathed slowly and deeply. In neither woman, Gaut realized, was there a stain of hysteria. But Gilbert was crumpled. "You red savage," he said in a whisper. Then he half screamed: "Gaut, take it away!" Gaut spoke ironically. "It's too bad to upset your dinner." Rosamunda stood imperiously. "Move it from the table," she commanded him. Her voice was entirely steady. Gaut dropped the scalp on the floor. Mariquita was absolutely still.

Gaut admired Rosamunda Penny immensely — her breeding was unconquerable. God, he thought, with a glance at Gilbert huddled in his chair, how she must be suffering! Well, there was no excuse, no reason, for him to delay. His anger was dead. The flare of primitive brutality had deserted him. "I'm sorry it ended like this," he said awkwardly to Mariquita. She made no reply. There was no evidence she had heard him, that he was in the room. If he didn't go, he realized, he would be wretchedly, impotently, humble. His horse was cropping the grass near the gallery; he mounted without difficulty. James Starin had collected Gaut's things on the bed; the saddlebags were ready.

"We'll leave the quickest way," Starin proceeded; "up the River. The news about the American purchase is out, but New Orleans isn't ready for it yet." Gaut didn't care. He slipped wearily into a chair. James Starin gazed at him keenly. He brought a tumbler of rum from a jug on a stand. "All of it," he commanded. "Then we'll get off before there is any objection." The body of the Spaniard

had disappeared. "If I had tried to stop you," Starin proceeded, "you would have had the knife in me. For a little you were real bad. I am glad Philadelphia is a good piece from here. Casimir Penny would have a right to be stirred up about his sons. One a slave-dealer and the other acting like there was still a bounty on scalps. But I have to say you took it to a damned poor market. I suppose you sent it in for Mr. Gilbert and the ladies with your compliments. Everybody bowing and scraping. I'll bet it was the first time a scalp was made a present in New Orleans. It's not something down here you would send to a girl. Not in this climate."

There was a knock on the door: the servant had returned. Rosamunda Penny was with him. "It seemed to me you would go at once," she said. Gaut brought forward a chair, but she ignored it. She totally disregarded James Starin. "My sister and I do not agree, she insists it is unimportant; I want you to know that she realized nothing about — about Mr. Penny's investments. What he did I approve of, I do not explain him or apologize to you; it is different with Mariquita. You would naturally misunderstand her. Mariquita was not frightened by what you brought to the plantation. It didn't accuse her." Gilbert said: "I know that. I won't bother you with how it happened. I did it, the truth is, because I was in love with your sister. I was damn mad."

There was nothing more, Rosamunda proceeded, for her to say. She wouldn't allow him to go with her to the street. Gaut Penny gazed helplessly at Starin. "It was magnificent, but what did it mean?" he demanded. James Starin was busy with the rum jug. "Have another," he

said; "you need it after last night. I wonder, sometimes, how people get through life. Considerable people. Have a drink. It's due you. I put out the leather breeches and you had better change that cambric shirt. You'll need a lot of thin shirts right soon. White linen pantaloons. Take a drink. It's a hard ride into Mississippi. As I was saying, how some, and considerable, too, get through life is more than I can make out. They can't see a thing, not even a sword-cane, when it's right in front of them. If I was Gilbert Penny I would take myself to the River. Where it was deep." Gaut cried: "For God's sake, what are you raving about? Be quiet and pack." James Starin still paused. "What you need is a drink," he said. "You're as good as married. You can call it magnificent, but that's what it meant."

VI.

SIX

THE SNOW changed from gold with cobalt-blue shadows to lavender, the sky turned from yellow to green, a clear green on the horizon darkened at the zenith, stars appeared at once white and brilliant. The cold increased. The evening was still. The stillness was broken by a sharp challenge of drums. It began at the right of the first line of encampment and beat until it was taken up by the corps of artillery on the far left; then it rang through the second line; the drums of the Reserve followed; all the drums of the army sounded at the heads of their corps. It ended with a long-drawn expiring roll again on the right. The cold increased. The snow, except where it was frozen in ridges and gleaming surfaces of ice, was dry and musical like rosin. A pure and exquisite powder. The lavender vanished and it became luminous, mysterious in tone; the darkness at the edges of the woods was mysterious and transparent. The stars glittered in the metallic immensity of the sky.

Captain Ephrim Benezet, of Lieutenant-Colonel William Butler's Second Pennsylvania Brigade, who was already numb, could feel the cold increase. He was more warmly dressed, too, than most of the army at Valley Forge. In addition to a fragmentary woolen undergarment, the greater part of a shirt and breeches comparatively whole—except for the legs—he had a

tattered but thick dressing-gown wrapped as closely as possible about his body; pieces of sacking were tied at his ankles with twine; his head and ears were protected by a large silk madras handkerchief. His exposed hands, however, were no better than useless — there was a suspicious quietness of pain in them and he couldn't manage to close his fingers. Probably, he thought, his hands were frozen again, and a bitter angry resentment possessed him. He wished now that he had carried a pike instead of one of the new issue of flintlock rifles. A rifle was heavy and horribly cold and it couldn't — this one, at any rate — be fired. The old slow match-fire was more dependable.

A pinched smile moved his stiff lips — Dr. Franklin, idiotically, had advised the American Army to give up firearms in favor of bows and arrows. Ephrim Benezet had a ridiculous vision of Sullivan's men engaging the Hessians with bows and arrows. He saw in imagination arrows striking absurdly in the high brass Hessian hats. Before him seven men of his company were dragging a sled laden with wood. One of the runners of the sled was broken squarely off in front, and when it met a sudden rise in the ground it held the sled, while the men pulled and slipped and cursed weakly. That had happened now, and he stood waiting for the load to be moved on. He had a human instinct to put his shoulder to the weight, to drag at the rope of thick grape-vine, but he did neither. Instead, he remained silent and inactive, remote in bearing and severe of expression. He said sharply:

"Galtry, you are not pulling. I've noted you several times. Help Thedlock Riner here at the back." The soldier he addressed gave a useless shove. Galtry struck a glaze

of ice and fell. He got up slowly and stood in an attitude of sullen dejection. Benezet waited a moment. "Now, Galtry," he said, "if you are rested we will go on." Galtry replied that he wasn't rested. "I never expect to be rested again. I've been barefooted on this snow and nothing in my stomach for a week." Benezet commanded him to return to the sled. "I won't," the soldier replied; "I won't because I can't."

"You can walk," Benezet told him.

"No," Galtry asserted; "I can't."

"James Polegreen, Ishmael Bomel," Ephrim Benezet called. "Galtry says he can't walk. We equally can't leave him here. Help him on the sled and pull him into camp." He was answered by a smothered but audible anger. Ishmael Bomel, a big man, caught Galtry by the shoulder. "You can't walk, hey?" he proceeded. "We are to pull you into camp are we? Well, I can't walk either, and James Mease can't walk, and no more can John Henmarsh. None of us, but we're walking. And now we have to pull you. If I ever do get a pair of shoes again I'm going to wear them out on your behind." Benezet's voice was thin and sharp: "Silence. Galtry, I'm going to confine you to your hut until a court-martial stands you on your feet. You other men in the hut will be responsible for him. March."

It was, Benezet admitted to himself, a damned shame. An outrage. The men in his company hadn't had a decent thing to eat for a week. The seven individuals of the present detail did not have, amongst them, enough clothes to keep one warm. Three, he saw, had bare feet. Stark naked feet on the ice and dry snow. There was a bare arm and shoulder, a gleam of back through casual rags. The

Continental Line, Ephrim Benezet told himself, moving forward. General Washington's Army. The noble army of freedom! They were moving up the Gulf road and the encampment lay immediately ahead. The empty Commissary-General's quarters were already behind them. Back of the exterior line of entrenchments lay Muhlenberg's division. They slowly passed the dark line of huts that held Weedon's Virginia men. Forward on the right lay Poor and, beyond, the Pennsylvania Line. A picket stopped them; the officer had a household rug about his shoulders. The detail proceeded uphill past Knox's artillery and through the abatis that guarded Conway and Maxwell and the approach to General Headquarters.

On either side the lines of huts reached with scarcely a glimmer of light. The doors were closed, the single windows blocked with anything to keep out a degree of cold. Some of the officers' huts, larger and standing alone, showed the flicker of a candle. Benezet shared a hut with the commissioned officers of two companies of Butler's command and he was anxious to get back to it. William Pawlet, an ensign, had sold his knitted gloves and as a result had been able to purchase, among other things, a gallon of apple brandy. The regimental sutler had delivered the brandy, Benezet knew, soon after six o'clock; it was now well past nine; and his hope in the gallon was rapidly diminishing.

The wood was to be left at the headquarters of General Washington's Life Guards, at the farthest end of the camp, and at moments Ephrim Benezet doubted if his men could drag it there. He was sorry about Galtry, but that couldn't be helped. Only the sharpest discipline now,

he understood, could save the American Army. If it were not already lost. The night actually grew colder — his left hand was definitely frozen — and suddenly his thoughts turned to Philadelphia. He had often been there — he lived at Wayne Meeting — and he knew it well, its streets and taverns and neat brick amplitude, its rigid society in drawing-rooms flooded with the light of crystal chandeliers; and he looked back on his knowledge, his experience, of it with the sensation of recalling an extravagant dream. It was at present, if anything, gayer than his memory, brilliant with the scarlet and gilt of the King's uniform, luxurious with Tory beauty. The British officers, he understood, had a weekly ball at the City Tavern, they attended long late suppers at the Indian Queen. Philadelphia had been entirely hospitable to Sir William Howe.

Well, why not? The rich Quaker merchants had no interest in a freedom gained at the cost of rebellion. Of war. What shopkeeper would sell his wares for worthless Continental paper when he could get bright English gold? The struggle for freedom was only a nuisance to Philadelphia. Ephrim Benezet realized this and at the same time he regarded Philadelphia with a bitterness of both resentment and contempt. He had a right, he felt, to its support. At least it owed him clothes against the winter and food. He was an officer in a Pennsylvania regiment. There were times when safety and material advantage were not only ignominious but impossible. He had arrived, he saw, at General Washington's headquarters.

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BEYOND the Gulf road, where the land rose sharply to the low crown of Mount Joy, Nathanael Greene occupied the house he had taken when his wife Mary arrived at Valley Forge. Before that he had inhabited a hut, and he was extremely glad to see her; but not only on account of the necessary added comfort — his affection for her was deep-rooted in the realization of her many admirable qualities. His appreciation was quickly shared by the officers close, like himself, to General Washington. At present, in a small stiff country parlor, were Allan McLane, Colonel Hand, of a Lancaster regiment, and a Captain Benezet from the Second Brigade of Butler's Pennsylvania Line. Drawn aside from the others, Mary was exercising her limited knowledge of the French language on General Lafayette and Gimat, his aide. McLane was talking: "It was so damned cold I had to pour the rum I had left into my boots to keep my feet from freezing. Anyhow, we were picketed back from the road and heard footsteps across the snow. There was a hedge. We picked up two women and a man. The women had forty chickens hung about their waists and the man all the flour he could carry. For Philadelphia. My detail was so cursed starved and discouraged we gave him two hundred and fifty lashes. You know how it is, General," he turned to Greene. "You had a foraging party of your own. You can't keep supplies from going into the city. It's not only to Howe's Army either."

"Yes," Greene agreed, "I know how it is. So does Ballard and Lee. Colonel Spencer couldn't find a beef in Goshen. It was scarcely better, Harmer discovered, along the Brandywine. I will say this — when I got done at

Edwards's Tavern and the meeting-house at Providence, the country was bare. There wasn't a shilling's worth of parched corn left. But you are right. This is Philadelphia and Philadelphia is Tory. The Quakers want their commerce and they want their King and no ragged freedom. I'm not bothered by that, though, by what happens out of the army; it's what is happening in the army I am afraid of."

"I went into Philadelphia last week," Captain McLane continued. "Five men with me. Dressed in British cavalry uniforms. It was hard not to laugh. We collected a Captain Sandford, on horse, at Second Street bridge, and just missed the Adjutant-General with all his papers, near Chestnut. I turned up Walnut Street and added a Varnum, the jailor under Galloway, to our prizes; and if I'd had any luck, any at all, I should have brought Howe back. Isaac Parrish told me he had just gone by. We saw him, from Cormer's house, riding down South Street with his general officers. I will say, for the girls of Philadelphia, they looked a damned sight more martial than we do. Benezet, here, wouldn't be much of a success in that wreck of a dressing-gown."

"I don't care about Captain Benezet's dressing-gown," Greene insisted. "It isn't what is on the army; it's what is in it." McLane replied quickly: "You mean the Gates-Conway nuisance." It was more than a nuisance, Greene told him very seriously. "James Lovell, from Congress, is at Conway's headquarters tonight. We can fight the British, we can even do without Philadelphia, but we can't fight Congress too. Specially since the War Board has been created. The War Board," he repeated contemptuously,

"with Gates at the head and Wilkinson to help him. Do you happen to know why Benezet is in rags? Why the men have no food? Why we have more dead horses than alive? I'll tell you. Congress. Gates. Conway. Benjamin Rush. The War Board. The board of war. I ought to realize it: I wrote what I thought about promoting Conway to Major-General and Wilkinson to Brigadier and that took care of my future. They are determined to ruin General Washington. If they do, it's all over. It's a victory only to keep this wreck of an army in the field. If we haven't beaten the British they haven't beaten us. With any help at all from the country they couldn't."

"The country, if Philadelphia means anything, has no interest in freedom," Hand asserted. " My rifle corps, I'm glad to say, re-enlisted until the end after a year's service. Where else, in Pennsylvania, will you find that? If short enlistments keep on we won't have a thousand men by spring." Greene added: "Then the bounties for service must be stopped. I hear men are paid as high as fifty sovereigns to go into state regiments. It's natural they won't serve in the Continental Army."

"What is to be done?" McLane asked.

"Only one thing," Greene told him; "no matter how bad the rest is, it needn't be fatal —"

"General Washington," Hand broke in.

"General Washington," Greene repeated. "It's a curious thing — so far as I'm concerned he represents the whole war for liberty. I admire him, he is able, but it isn't that. I don't know what it is. I am not logical about it. You must remember I am a Quaker; that wasn't changed when I was put out of meeting, and my instincts are not

primarily for war. There is something more than a soldier in Washington. Something more than intelligence. He would be even better in times of peace than war. Times of peace sounds extraordinary. Far off if not impossible. I suppose it will come. Colonel Hand, when it does, what will it be like? Shall we still be English or free men?"

"Free," Hand said with great emphasis. Allan McLane said: "By God, but we will!" Benezet reiterated the word free. "For example," Greene went on, "von Steuben is a better officer than General Washington. Baron von Steuben, outside of Washington, has done more for the army than any other single man." There was an instinctive turning of heads toward Lafayette. "Do you think so?" Lafayette responded. "Do you indeed? I am surprised. That is a tremendous compliment. Now, I am told that America could not exist without France." That, Greene acknowledged, was true. "I was speaking of men and not of the generosity of nations." However, he showed no sign of receding from his position. "Von Steuben is taking a rabble and making it into an army. A weapon. He has dropped his rank, his memories of the court and church dignity, to drill our men with a musket. He is, simply, a great soldier. General Washington is more. The French, I am certain, are more."

"That is handsome enough," Lafayette acknowledged. "If I don't rise, it is my leg." The candlelight, by which Mary Greene was sewing, slid over his narrow impetuous face and unpowdered red hair. He was, Nathanael Greene reflected, hardly more than a boy. His usefulness, too, was great; but never as a soldier. Lafayette was a — a pledge of French interest and credit and ships. Without

that, as Lafayette had intimated, there couldn't be an American freedom. Help denied in Philadelphia, refused by Congress, must come from abroad. Captain McLane rose. "I must get back to my post," he explained. "It will be easy when Sullivan's bridge is finished. Now I have to go a mile above Old Swede's Ford and find John Rambo and his canoe. General Greene, I'll be in your debt for taking my report to the Commander-in-Chief. General Armstrong sends his regards and you can be sure Barren Hill is as correctly named as we can make it." General Lafayette and his aide withdrew immediately afterward:

"You should not have said that about Baron von Steuben," Mary Greene told her husband. "You know there is no admiration between them. I suppose the Quaker in you must come out." Hand said: "Captain McLane ought to be promoted. He is valuable." Greene, who was a fragile man, was tired. "So was Philip Schuyler valuable," he replied wearily; "Gates ruined him. Mary, I'm going to bed." He addressed Benezet, "Thank you, Captain Benezet. I regretted the necessity of calling you out of your hut. Mary, I think it wouldn't be improper, it's an extremely cold night, to offer the captain a little of your rum." Benezet thanked him. "Thank you, sir, I won't rob her, there is some apple brandy that did not get into Philadelphia waiting for me at our quarters."

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A DEMAND in darkness hardly thinned by the light of a single wick floating in melted grease asked if the cider jug was empty. It was Galtry, and James Polegreen an-

swered him. "It is. If there was more, it would be in me or in John Henmarsh or in Mease. Anybody but you. You're a prisoner." Thedlock Riner added: "Making us ride him into camp! Like he was a bloody English general and we were Hessian men." The voices came generally from the space before the fireplace, opposite the door into the hut. No fire was burning, the interior was hardly less cold than the cold night, but there was an implication of comfort in the blackened opening of the chimney. "It's so stinking in here," Thomas Venn said, "we ought to burn another blank cartridge." He was cautioned against setting fire to the roof. "This morning's inspection ordered us to have that spread of canvas replaced in forty-eight hours," someone remarked. "Yes," Galtry added, "and I heard the bastard tell you to get fresh straw ticks. Only he forgot to say where you'd find the straw. Thedlock Riner wants to remember I had nothing to do with riding me into camp. Benezet provided you with that. He's a nice officer to command men in an old slut's bedgown. I don't know how you stand it," Galtry continued. "I wouldn't, if it could be helped: no hospital stores, no straw, no blankets. Fire cake, and a soup that's water, and weeds, and bread. Decayed herring. When have you had a piece of meat, or coffee with sugar in it, or milk? Not for weeks is when. It's getting worse and not better."

"It's bad," Thedlock Riner acknowledged, "and I don't doubt it will be worse. What of it, Galtry? What can you do about it?" Nothing, Galtry replied, could be done for any God damn American freedom. "You have to look out for yourself. Make yourself comfortable while it is going on. Philadelphia is the place to do that. I'd like

to be on the Falls road now. Going back. Down Callowhill and up Second Street. If I was in Philadelphia I'd go to the Faithful Irishman; a woman named Barry, Isabella Barry, keeps it on Strawberry Alley; and I wouldn't leave but on a shutter. And not through bitter beer or cider either. I wouldn't lay around in this pen."

"Where's the blank cartridge, Thomas?" James Mease demanded. "It's getting worse with Galtry talking so much." There was a white flare of burning powder; for an instant the poverty, the utter bareness, of the hut was made appallingly vivid. The only beds were a thin litter of straw, the table was no better than loose boards; there were no chairs and no chests. The seven men who inhabited it possessed nothing. "I suppose," Thedlock continued, "if you were in Philadelphia you would join yourself to Sir William Howe." Galtry replied bitterly: "To hell with Howe and his army too. If I could be an officer, that might be different. I'd take to being a British officer in Philadelphia now. A farmer who goes there regular with supplies told me there was nothing but dancing in the taverns, and music and drinking everywhere. He told me he saw a piece of a ball at the City Tavern where the women's skirts were as wide around at the bottom as Chester County and the women were as naked as you like at the top. That's what you'd have in Philadelphia if you were one of Howe's captains."

Ishmael Bomel rose to light a pipe at their solitary wick. He had been a rope-maker, and his shoulders were stooped from bearing heavy weights of hemp up and down the lengths of rope-walks. He was, as well, a man with religious inclinations, and disclaimed all carnal liv-

ing. "I wouldn't envy none that," he proclaimed. "I'd rather be Nathanael Greene, with as little as he has, than feed on scarlet husks. I believe if the Lord has an army this is the army of the Lord. It has the look of it."

"It has, if starving the flesh is any sign," Galtry assented. "If I could get a bullet in that Stewben, there would be one less. For what he put me through. Not that Greene and the officers here don't do better than you think. Look at Washington with a big farmhouse and his wife and wine and Virginia tobacco." John Henmarsh put in: "I know a man who stood guard at headquarters, he is one of Glover's Marblehead sailors, and he said he saw it for a fact General Washington had nothing but common toddy to drink and ate walnuts for dessert." Galtry answered this by reiterating that Philadelphia was the place to be. "It's the finest city in America, there is always something to look at, and London or Rome won't be better. It's full of people, they are not all Quakers either, and different from this frozen hell of loneliness.

"What are we here for anyhow? See if Thedlock Riner can answer that. Or Thomas Venn. Do you know? Philadelphia don't want to be independent. I don't." Thedlock Riner explained. He was a very explanatory man. "It's a principle. Sam Adams started it in Boston. Only a few men, like Adams, or Dr. Franklin, ever see a principle. It's like looking into the future. Well, they looked into the future and saw how things were going. Bad! The King tried one thing and that worked; then he tried the Stamp Acts, and that looked as if it would work, and if it had of, we would soon be nowhere. Then we found a George too. A right damned good George." Galtry added:

"General Gates is better. Look what he did to the British in the North. If General Gates was in command we'd be in Philadelphia now instead of Lord Howe. We'd all be sitting in the Faithful Irishman, drinking hot rum. Or at the King of Poland Ollers has on Vine Street. Or in the Cork Arms down on Water Street below Walnut. Gates would drive the English out of Philadelphia in a week."

"You're a simple kind of a bastard," James Mease informed him. "Just what would Gates drive Howe out of Philadelphia with? We haven't got any men and we haven't got any guns and we haven't any horses if we had and generally we haven't got a damn thing. How could Gates, or Gabriel, attack a fortified city that way? If you can think of an answer I'll take it to General Washington myself in what's left of my drawers and a potato sack." Galtry muttered that there were simple bastards present . . . six of them.

"For a paper shilling I'd knock your mouth in," Riner told him. "You're not a soldier. You're just a belly. That's what you are. Philadelphia is the place for you. If you weren't under arrest I'd see you got there. James Mease is a fool to bother with you. What do you know about General Washington and Gates? I can tell you. Nothing. If there was one more like you in the army we'd all be in English prison ships. From now on keep quiet until you are drummed out of camp. If you don't, there will be a court-martial right in this hut. It won't be drums that will mark you."

A profound silence fell upon them; the flicker of light from the burning grease hardly identified the seven figures about the black hearth. The cold increased. Ishmael

Bomel gingerly felt his feet. One had opened again and there was blood on his fingers. He was surprised that it would flow. "The army of the Lord," he repeated silently. It was a phrase that comforted him. It explained present hardship and held a promise for the future. Freedom here or in heaven. The army, the purpose and reward, of God. It was better to suffer than grow fat in Philadelphia. Whom the Lord loved he exceedingly tried. A sleep that was more physical numbness than oblivion possessed him. He saw his captain, Ephrim Benezet, in a ragged dressing-gown; General Washington on horse, folded to the eyes in a greatcoat. What he could see of his face was grey, his eyes were burning. Ishmael Bomel heard cannon and saw a fog lurid with gunfire. The morning of Germantown. They were flung back, but above them hung a glory and a shadow, a flame and a pillar of cloud. The image of General Washington reached to the heavens, and far below him, no bigger than the palm of Thomas Venn's hand, lay the great city of Philadelphia. The pinch of emptiness at his stomach brought him back to starved consciousness.

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THERE was bareness but no disorder in the hut occupied by Frederick William Augustus Henry Ferdinand, Baron von Steuben. It was larger than the company huts and, tenanted by only one man, owned an appearance of comparative emptiness; it was austere but comfortable. A small fire burning on the hearth was at least perceptible in the cold — it drew the attention of a revived optimism

to itself — a single blanket was precisely disposed on a narrow precise pallet; at its foot stood a capacious leather box; there was a small table with papers and ink and quills held upright in sand — each quill at exactly the same angle — and a stand had been constructed to support a burnished steel mirror and von Steuben's razors. There were a number of those in a worn morocco case. Von Steuben was seated bolt upright and a servant was busy with his powdered hair. The Inspector-General of the American forces was quietly smoking a pipe with a long stem, and at his hand was a tall filled glass, steaming and colorless. He was almost fifty, he had a strongly marked aggressive nose, a heavy brow, and a gaze at once severe and lighted with humor. His face, however, was reflective, it bore the intangible but perceptible shadow of self-discipline and solitude. The servant finished with the Baron's hair for the night; von Steuben rose and resumed his blue military coat faced with buff. He wore a cross suspended by a coronet on a ribbon, and a great jewelled star burned and flashed on his left breast. When he stood he was rigidly erect, his shoulders were sharply square, and his strong chin high. "Ask Mr. Duponceau to come in," he directed. He spoke in German, in a tone of cold exacting authority, contriving to give his words an English intelligence. There was no need for that with Duponceau.

"Tell Captain Ternant, tomorrow I will have a review of all the companies that have received my instruction. I am done with addressing them singly. Tell Captain Ternant that the junior officers will be responsible for their respective platoons. I will take no part in the drill until it is completed." While he was instructing, the interpreter

De Kalb entered, a tall man superficially resembling von Steuben. His mold was harsher, however, his severe bearing and expression without a light of humor. "Johann," von Steuben greeted him, "I have made a discovery. It is called apple brandy. I have had eleven glasses this evening and it is still pleasant." De Kalb had encountered apple brandy. "I don't like it," he asserted. "Eleven glasses, three, would kill me." Von Steuben laughed. "You have become a Frenchman," he said; "you resemble the Marquis de Lafayette. Elegant. Attenuated. Enthusiastic." De Kalb replied: "If you call me enthusiastic, you must be drunk." Von Steuben indicated the chair and leaned an elbow on the stand with the mirror and razors. "An idea, or possibly even a thought, is trying to force its way out of your thick skull," he said.

"I am doubtful about General Washington's position," De Kalb admitted. "In this wretched parody of a republican government there is no safety of individuals. The valuable together with the valueless. I doubt if Washington is intelligent enough to survive the attacks on him. Congress doesn't want him, the country is indifferent, and there is even a beginning mutter in the army. I hear it more clearly than you. I am not so near to General Washington."

"Johann," von Steuben protested, "is it possible I heard you reflect critically on the glorious, the French, institution of liberty? Did you express some doubt about the infallible wisdom of the people? Are you drunk? Remember your French attachments, I might say preferments." There was at once humor and an intended sharpness of comment in von Steuben's words. De Kalb told

him not to be nasty. "The Seven Years' War is over, William. We are not on opposite sides now, but together in America. There is talk about General Gates for Commander-in-Chief, very powerful influences are in favor of that, and what do you think?" Von Steuben thought it was folly. "Gates is an opportunist. A political meddler. A soldier in Congress but not on the field. Washington has defects — so have I, Johann — perhaps his intellect is limited, but he is the best man in America. His order of battle for Germantown, we will admit privately, was not perfection. It was good on paper but not over rough country. Divisions six or seven miles apart, only connected by couriers, cannot move in absolute harmony. There was confusion and disorder among the officers. Yes, and drunkenness. Well, Germantown was lost. And yet, Johann, it was not. How do you account for that? The Continental Army remained the Continental Army. It picked itself up and survived to camp here. With Gates that could not have occurred. The Americans would have gone home; the rebellion come to nothing. The reason we are here, and that you still have a chance to distinguish yourself in the eyes of France, is General Washington."

"Regard Knyphausen," von Steuben continued; "we both know him and respect him as a man, as a German, and as a soldier. He is at present most comfortable in Philadelphia. He is warm, he has proper dinners and wine, and he has music. Knyphausen is part of a force that occupies the principal city of America, and it is very possible the cause he represents, the cause he was sold to — honorably, of course — will be successful. Now! We are not

comfortable in any particular; we are frozen day and night; we have no dinners that even a self-respecting cook would prepare — mine left the week I arrived, for Philadelphia — I content myself with apple brandy instead of better things, and there is no music but the fifes and drums. Now, Johann:

"Would you exchange places with Knyphausen, in Philadelphia? Would you give up your connection with our humorous Continentals to command the Hessians? Would you rather be a part of the British forces if they win, or lose with the Americans? But I don't want you to answer. It would be ridiculous. Degrading even to announce your choice. There is no honor to be had with Sir William Howe, only a soldier's duty to perform. Comfortable, you would be uncomfortable in Philadelphia. In the end, in any end, insignificant. Look, Johann, why do you suppose I am here? I am almost old and my life has been hard. Continual battle. Remember that I was fourteen at the siege of Prague, and that after Prague and Rossbach, a year after, I was Adjutant-General. You'd think I'd have had enough war. I am rich, I have activities that are not military — among other things a canonship of the cathedral of Havelberg. It wasn't St. Germain that, at heart, persuaded me to come to America. No, it was a feeling that America had shown again the spirit of liberty. I have no illusions about the obvious causes of the war with England. They are obvious. Lord Howe and Philadelphia are obvious. Something else is implied, like the spark struck by a dull flint and an insensate piece of steel."

"You haven't replied to my question," De Kalb told

him. "Do you think General Washington's position is really precarious? Will he be removed from supreme command?" Von Steuben said: "In other words, do I think it would be wise for you to cultivate Gates and Conway and Wilkinson? Had you better present your compliments to the Continental Congress? I do not. It would be fatal if you did." De Kalb complained about his sense of humor. "You are never completely serious," he proceeded. "I am willing to believe that you are not insulting. My record, like your own, is open to the fullest inspection." Von Steuben agreed. "No one will say that you are not a brave man. I am willing to add honest, Johann. If there is any question, it is only one of ambition." When De Kalb had gone, von Steuben sat reading under a candle. At times the smoke from his pipe seriously obscured the tenuous light. The servant replenished the diminutive fire. The Inspector-General's hands were congested from cold. When he laid aside the pipe, his breath was still visible in steady silver clouds. The star on his breast sparkled.

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He wanted it understood by everybody, Gates said, and particularly by Mr. Lovell, that his attitude toward General Washington was not colored by personal ambition. "I am not, in other words, looking for advancement." James Lovell made no reply. Major-General Thomas Conway and Brigadier-General James Wilkinson said nothing. Their faces were studiously blank. General Conway's hut, identical with the Baron von Steuben's,

was yet different in that it was completely warm — an orderly kept a large fire burning on the hearth in recognition of the presence of General Gates and the member of the Continental Congress from Massachusetts. The hut was bare, yet it was not austere; there was a small observable negligence in its details. "I understand as well as anyone," Gates went on, "that in the case General Washington was retired I should probably — I might even say naturally — succeed to the command of the army. For that reason I am limited in the expression of an opinion. I am limited, but not afraid of an opinion: General Washington is not by temperament an appropriate man to occupy his present position. I should rather say temperament than attainments. Though I am willing to face those too. I am a Virginian and I know its habits and men. A long experience in armies has carried me a little outside it. My dear Mr. Lovell, a confirmed holder of negro slaves, a local despot, could not express the people and will of the confederated states. As his power increased he would only grow more despotic. That is the attitude, I will admit to you, of the War Board. The War Board, to be even plainer, would regard the success of General Washington with some concern. It would feel that his success must have a later unfortunate sequence. To the states."

"Hell," Brigadier-General Conway said impatiently. "General Washington is a weak man in action and a weak man in council. It's very pleasant to be considerate and politic, but it only confuses the issue. The issue is General Washington. He is dangerous and absurd at the same time. Dangerous on account of the flattery about him. Absurd because he is beginning to believe it. Look at the

men who support him. What are they? Greene is nothing but a hanger-on, a discredited Quaker. The Earl of Sterling! A fat drunkard from New York. And even Germantown didn't stop Sullivan bragging. Sullivan and Wayne made a handsome spectacle in the army accusing each other of running. Wayne the Drover. Those are the officers, if you don't forget little Hamilton, from the nigger isles, who want General Washington in command. Why not?"

"At the same time," Mr. Lovell commented, "I must acknowledge that I am disappointed in this evening. I came down from York, with General Gates, at considerable trouble to get some sense of the feeling in the army. It is, I think, important. I understood from General Gates there would be a consultation of field officers." Wilkinson replied: "The men we hoped you'd see are all on tours of duty. There isn't so much, Mr. Lovell, that is tangible in the growing opposition to General Washington. It is more a thing in the air. Like a gathering thunder." Gates put in: "The whole situation can be measured by his surrender, without a struggle, of Philadelphia. That is why the members of Congress are uneasy about him. Philadelphia is immensely important in the public view. It is the most prominent city in the Confederation. I might say that our entire credit, and that would mean our success, depends on it. We need it for its resources and we need it for effect." James Lovell inquired, "Could General Washington have held it with a larger part of the Army of the North?"

"That," Gates replied carefully, "is wholly problematic. I spoke of the attitude of the War Board toward General Washington. General Wilkinson will bear me

out. We are afraid of him. If he were a different man, I have no doubt the entire situation here could be changed. The lack of facilities cannot be cured with General Washington in command."

"I ought to tell you," Lovell proceeded, "that in all probability a Congressional investigation of the Valley Forge camp will be ordered. Mr. Thompson, the Secretary, is insisting on it." Gates declared he would welcome such a proceeding. Conway thought that, if possible, it should be stopped. Just now it would be inadvisable. Any committee that came to the encampment would see the wrong men. "Don't get it into your heads," he proceeded, "that General Washington is disliked in the Continental Army. His officers take care of that. And don't think he isn't a practical man. He is at least shrewd. The truth is that a legend is being created about him. Already we have a sort of ideal to fight. If we are not careful, we shall all be lost in it. And, Mr. Lovell, General Gates is right about a success. If General Washington does win an important battle, as important, we'll say, as Saratoga, why —" it was evident he couldn't put a limit to the unfortunate consequences of that. Wilkinson added: "Have you noticed that General Washington has never won a battle? He has never even been concerned in a victory. He was at Fort Necessity, on the Ohio, when it surrendered. He was defeated with Braddock before New York. He planned the failure against Canada. He was beaten at the Brandywine and Germantown. He lost New York and then Philadelphia."

It was evident Mr. Lovell had been impressed. He poured out for himself a small measure of rum from a

squat black bottle. "That has never been brought out in Congress," he said. "It is a point. General Gates, the road to Lancaster will not grow shorter. What do you think? Is the escort ready?" When James Lovell and Gates had gone, Conway near to filled his glass with rum. In the presence of no more than Wilkinson he relaxed. "General Gates is all Platonic about the command-in-chief. He doesn't want it for himself. The welfare of the states is what he's after. Well, he's a God damned liar like you. Or me if you like it better. There may be no states, James. Don't let that slip out of your calculations. Then we shall all have to go back to France. In a hurry. Did you hear the General about the War Board? That's what is the matter with supplies. I mean why there are none. General Gates doesn't want General Washington to be too comfortable at Valley Forge and the Continental Congress is willing to help him. If the Continental Army had clothes or food or horses the War Board would fade out of existence.

"It wouldn't do, for example, to have General Washington in Philadelphia. Christ, no! The thing is wait until spring, with General Gates in command, and then bring the whole Northern Army down and crush Howe before he moves. That would have as good an effect on Europe. I'm in favor of it, James. You ought to agree, provided, always provided, you enjoy being a brigadier-general. That reminds me, I forgot to speak about Greene. You ought to do it. I guess you will have no trouble when you remember what he wrote about your promotion. If I am right he called it an outrage." Wilkinson said that Greene's letter had already been laid upon the table. "What I want

to see," Conway specified, "is Greene on the table. James, between you and me and the bottle of Medford rum, what do you think of Saint George from Virginia?" James Wilkinson took a deep reflective drink. "I don't know," he admitted; "I don't know. He's a damned hard problem. I'll ask you, General, what do you think of the chances of the states?"

"About one in six," Conway answered; "one chance in six of freedom." Wilkinson wondered audibly if the name of that chance were George Washington. "God damn it!" Conway cried, "I wish I hadn't been persuaded to come back into this stinking army. I was safe out of it, on my way to France. Lafayette as good as turned his back on me today. I only want justice, Wilkinson. I can't get it from General Washington, that's all. Now I'm in a conspiracy." Brigadier-General Wilkinson studied him with glimmering eyes.

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THE swift and impetuous voice falling on the sphere of its supreme command brought all other sound to an end. "Philadelphia! Philadelphia! There is too much talk about that orderly brick cemetery. I know that it is discussed in every branch of the army, the men in the line discuss it, the orderlies and aides speculate about it, the general officers wonder why Howe and not themselves are sitting in the City Tavern. The War Board addresses all its attention to Philadelphia, and Congress deliberates about nothing else. The farmers of Pennsylvania think it is the end and the reward of the rebellion. I am made to

understand that Europe is waiting to see what I do about Philadelphia. Well, in the face of all that, I intend to do nothing. Exactly so much. No more. Nothing. I tell you a city is a place of foul humors. A place of secret treasons. There are rich and poor in a city, close together, and when that happens, there is always disaffection. It would be difficult to know which was worse in Philadelphia — the rich Quakers or the venal poor. They are both opposed to everything we are promised to. The Pennsylvania of Philadelphia is opposed to us. It is an enemy country.

"We have authority to forage it, but the forages have been no better than raids, for the certificates of purchase are torn up and thrown in our faces. No one here will honor our money. It is only good enough to pay Continental soldiers with. The state soldiers, the associators, are paid in gold. In sovereigns. The farmers send supplies into Philadelphia because Philadelphia pays for them in sovereigns. When we need food the cattle are hidden in swamps, and when we need transport the horses and wagons are driven into the woods. We are not popular. Not at least with Philadelphia. A rich city. A city of rich and poor men. A city of men opposed to war. It is completely honest about that — it will not fight, it will not pay soldiers to fight, and especially it will not take its gold out of safe investment, English securities, and risk it on the side of freedom. The head of a king is on its money.

"Everyone nearly is of the opinion that I should have held Philadelphia. At any cost. Now that I must retake it. I tell you Philadelphia or any other city, any other place of foul humors, is of no importance to me. For what we

are promised to. I am reminded that the whole of Europe came to our support after the success at Saratoga, and that, to a point, is true; it gained us the attachment of the Emperor Frederick William. I am reminded that we cannot succeed without France; and that, within certain limits, is true. It is truer that we cannot succeed outside of ourselves. If we conquered Philadelphia, it would be good; if we tried and failed, it would be fatal. The chance is too great and not enough in our favor. The memory of nations is too short for dependence.

"Dr. Franklin is in France; we can depend on him there and he must depend on us here. That is a simple relationship of integrity and responsibility. We shall, I am certain, meet our obligation. We are meeting it every hour. I want you to realize that I am doing my utmost. I am not ignorant of the difficulty I am personally creating for you. With another commander — with General Gates, in short — there would be food and supplies and clothing. Probably under General Gates you would be in Philadelphia now. I asked for reinforcements, to hold the country here, and Congress gave me twenty-five hundred men. Fourteen thousand were available.

"Yes, you would have warm clothes and food and men, but it is my sacred opinion that you would be no better off. Not as well. I say that although it has a sound of arrogance. I am not, at heart, an arrogant man. I am a stiff man, a stubborn man, but I am not arrogant. I ask you to consider the success of the late campaign in the North. Consider General Gates. He is a monument of lead on a foundation of extraordinary nobility. The spirit of Herkimer and of Colonel John Stark. A monument with the

words Oriskany and Bennington on it. Morgan's corps of rifle men. And then Congress, in love with the sweet odor of a title, gave the command to General Gates. The son, you see, of the housekeeper of the Duke of Leeds. If he had sent General Arnold support, there would scarcely have been a Battle of Saratoga. General Gates, in his letter to Congress, found it convenient to forget Arnold. He had Arnold removed from his command.

"General Gates has been in my encampment today, on his way to the Committee of Safety at Lancaster, to meetings of the War Board and Congress. His attention here was confined to Major-General Conway and Brigadier-General James Wilkinson. I am not impressed with the military attainments of Brigadier-General Wilkinson or with the candor of Major-General Conway. They are too much like Philadelphia for my complete comfort — waiting on personal benefit. No one here is doing that. No one can say I am serving a personal end. It isn't enough to be above suspicion, but it is necessary to be above suspicion — at Valley Forge. I am unable to say how things are regulated at Philadelphia. There is too much talk about it, and after this I am finished with it.

"I will not attack Philadelphia through the winter; I will not meet Howe in a general engagement until the result is at least in the balance. If Lord Howe attacks me in force we will fight and retreat and he will be welcome to the victory. We will wait and freeze and starve somewhere else. I tell you this is the lowest hour of the war and I tell you that I am not discouraged. It is natural for trouble and doubt to breed now. Remember that in the turn of a hand it can be gone. I am only interested, I am only con-

cerned, in men's motives. I understand the motive of General Gates and the motive of his War Board and of Philadelphia. They are not important unless they are established; and, by God, they will never be established. I assure you of that at the lowest hour of our struggle — when, in the general view of men in power, I am discredited. You fight my battle and hide the bitterness of opposition from me, but I am fully conscious of it.

"I know there are men of absolute honesty who think and write that I should retire in the interest of a whole good — if I retired there would be a complete harmony between the civil and the military forces — but in the interest of my conception of good I have no intention of surrendering to Philadelphia. There is a quality in this engagement that transcends common sense. There is a shape in it greater than a momentary convenience. Men oppose me because I am autocratic, they say, and because there must be no single figure of authority and power in the free states — a War Board and not a Commander-in-Chief. The people and not a government. No army can ever exist without a commander, and no country can exist without delegated government. That is clear in the Continental Congress — it has no power to lay taxes or control the acts of the individuals bound by it; it cannot even regulate the election and service of its members; it is helpless, within itself, to cross the boundary of a state. I have no belief in men who are afraid of authority or who refuse to admit human superiority.

"For those reasons there will be no more talk of Philadelphia. We will remain, as many of us as possible, at Valley Forge until spring. The summer will see a different

situation. A situation where Gates and Conway and Wilkinson will not be generals in command. If you will regard our position impersonally as military expediency, you will recognize that it is better than Lord Howe's. Howe, who is a general of high ability, is in an unhappy state because he has not taken us. A growing opinion in England, the English Parliament, are demanding his removal, and it is not my plan to have Congress successfully act the part of Parliament. Not with your lives and honor and with my responsibility."

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The long table at the Indian Queen, at which the officers of Sir William Howe's command frequently took supper, was set in the tap-room. On those occasions the tap-room was forbidden to the public of Philadelphia, there was a guard at the door, and, outside, a constantly shifting gathering of aides and orderlies and dispatch riders. Sir William Howe, at the table head, was a man of size and dignified bearing; he dominated his brilliant uniform easily — it was only a detail in the visible fact of his importance. It was plain, in addition, that he had an affable and pleasant worldly temper. Lord Cornwallis sat at his right, short and thickly made, with a strong face. Like Sir William Howe he was agreeable, easy in speech. Howe was able, but, it was recognized, Cornwallis was abler, the most considerable officer England had in America. At the other end of the table was Charles Grey, with his aide, Captain John André, beside him, a dark and melancholy and notably graceful young man.

In addition there were present Howe's brother, in charge of the British ships; Banastre Tarleton of the Light Dragoons, Brigade Major of British cavalry and the reverse of sad; Captain Richard Fitzpatrick in the Grenadier Guards; Lord Lindsey, who was drunker than reasonable and even more displeased than common; Montresor, commanding the sappers; Sir William Erskine; Richard Hovenden, Captain of a Philadelphia and Tory detachment; and Joseph Galloway, the Tory and police magistrate of the city. There was a bank of candles down the length of the table, a great fire was burning on a wide hearth, and the light shone on scarlet and blue and canary-colored cloth, gilt cords, and burnished silver chains, on the sleeves of mess-jackets heavy with the insignia of celebrated regiments and battles memorable in all the history of wars. The supper was at an end, the attention of the company was directed toward a better than satisfactory pale port, Old London Particular. The faces were flushed with food and heat and wine.

It was, however, a quiet occasion; the drinking was reflective; the things said were short and formal or awkward — there was a perceptible tension of shared and deep concern. Sir William Howe, putting away his glass, spoke with a sudden raised voice. "I have no doubt," he said, "that some of you know what has happened here and in England — I have been relieved of my command. Sir Henry Clinton will take my place." A complete silence met his announcement. "You probably know, too, that in December, when I was refused reinforcements, I wrote to the Secretary of State asking to be relieved. That has been agreed on." Captain André murmured that it

was a damned shame. "It is worse than that," Cornwallis corrected him; "it's a fatal mistake." Lindsey said he would be lucky to get out of the country, a land with inhabitants that couldn't be said to resemble human beings. Colonel Tarleton amended him:

"I have had a very respectable time in Philadelphia. A city that merits a certain praise." Fitzpatrick uselessly explained that, in Tarleton's view, any city merited praise where there were pretty girls. "The truth is," Sir William Howe went on, "that I am at once fortunate and unfortunate, I am discredited with my country and I am spared a hopeless effort." Lord Lindsey said loudly and disagreeably: "Hopeless effort? What does that mean?" Cornwallis regarded him frowning. "It means," Howe replied curtly, "that in my opinion we cannot be successful in America. Not eventually. I think General Washington's plan is clear and based on a quadrilateral, drawn from Newburgh to Morristown with West Point for a stand, from Trenton to Germantown, Chestnut Hill and the Perkiomen, and a retreat, if necessary, to the Virginia Valley. It would need twenty years to stamp the war out there. I am not speaking of the spirit of the people.

"Philadelphia, as we have all discovered, is not the people. To be quite candid I could almost wish that General Washington held Philadelphia instead of ourselves. It was a necessary part of our campaign, but it is nothing more. I am disappointed by the effect of taking it. The effect on the American people hasn't been large. It only upset the Continental Congress. The Rump! General Washington has been very frugal about it. Wisely. Now that we have Philadelphia the English people are dissatis-

fied because we haven't General Washington. It appears I should march out and annihilate him. Hah! Sir Henry Clinton must do that."

The door to the public way opened, an aide approached the table and spoke to Colonel Charles Lee. "General Howe," Lee said, "General Knyphausen has sent in a deserter from the American Army his Hessians stopped at Bush Hill. He thinks he may be more valuable than most. Would it interest you? When would you care to see him?"

There was small chance he would be interested, Sir William Howe replied; however, since General Knyphausen had been so kind, he would get done with it at once. A spontaneous laughter greeted the man who was led forward. A deserter from a dungheap, Lindsey asserted. "What was your regiment?" Cornwallis demanded. "Fourth Regiment Infantry, raised last January, under Lieutenant-Colonel William Butler." Why, Howe asked, had he deserted? "Because it was just that — a dungheap. But soon there won't be even dung left. The army is going to nothing. In under three weeks it lost two thousand men. Most left couldn't march — they have no clothes to march in. There is nothing to eat. We haven't even heard of the Quartermaster's Department. I doubt if there are ten thousand men left. Everybody is frozen with no blankets and they can't get wood because the horses are too starved to move it." Someone asked: "Your name?" It was Galtry, Leeson Galtry.

"That will do," Sir William Howe said impatiently. "We know all that. Get out and don't be overcome by the glory of serving in the English cause. If you are identified in any arm of the service you will be shot." Galtry

was both shaken by the reception of his information and defiant. "What I told you ought to be valuable," he insisted. "It's the state of things at Valley Forge. There is a lot of talk, too, about General Washington — he is a bad general and General Gates is to get the command." Sir William Howe turned with a complete surrender of indifference. "General Washington is a bad general," he repeated. "Gates is to have his command! If that is true," he said to Cornwallis, when Galtry had been withdrawn, "perhaps I was wrong. We may be successful. Wasn't it Gates that Burgoyne called an old midwife?" He recovered his glass and gazed silently down in it. His face was somber. "By God," Banastre Tarleton asserted, "we don't need reinforcements. We have the American Congress." Joseph Galloway asserted that, given time, the Americans would infallibly destroy themselves. Lord Cornwallis stared at him arrogantly. André said negligently: "I can't make out what but there is something wrong about an American Tory." After a little, Howe interrupted a stillness that had been broken only by the rush of flame in the chimney. "First me and then Washington." He drank. "Incredible in his case," he added aloud, but palpably only to himself. "Is there no decency in life? Christ!" he cried; "put no more wood on the fire. The room is a hell now."

The cold was decreasing. The sharpness of winter in the brick streets was dulled. Beyond Philadelphia a thin fog clung to the snow, blurring the ridges of ice. The stars lost their frozen clarity; they grew larger, it appeared, dimmer and more indefinite. The fog rose and increased. It was perceptible in the lanes between the huts

of the Valley Forge encampment. The picket on guard at Sullivan's unfinished bridge felt vaguely released from an iron rigor. Its individuals believed that it was warmer. Captain Ephrim Benezet, on a thin and uncovered tick of straw, fell deeply asleep. It was three o'clock, and Baron von Steuben's servant woke him. The Baron got up sharply, all his faculties gathered and alert. In the candlelight he was thin and gaunt, an aging man. There was a sound of breaking sheaths of ice from the limbs of trees left standing. James Polegreen had a dream that Thomas Venn was his wife.

VII.

SEVEN

When, in the spring of Eighteen sixty-nine, Saxegotha Laws died on his stock-farm in Fayette County, the state of Kentucky lost one of its most notable private citizens. He was not, however, local to the world of racing — a condition impossible for the owner of Powderhorn II and the breeder and owner of Transylvania — he had, simply, no political significance. On that side he avoided public life. It was curious, for his whole appearance, his manner, were those of a statesman of the early nineteenth century. He was tall and loosely constructed; his hands were broad and hard from incessant youthful labor, his face mobile and smooth-shaven. In addition, he had none of the expansiveness usually associated with tracks and stables: he almost never talked, he was an indifferent gambler, when he drank he fell into a deeper and deeper abstraction of being. But he wasn't somber — he had an engaging smile, his humor was irresistible, and he never lost his temper. The women of his family always declared that Mr. Laws was angelic.

His son-in-law, Lord Slieve, who was with him on the April evening when he died — Saxegotha Laws was seated at an open window gazing over tender blue-green meadows and a brilliant white paddock fence — was wholly devoted to him. The entire County of Wicklow,

he asserted, was his parish. It was Slieve who managed the black and maroon of Laws's stable. Laws's interest in his horses, in his innumerable acres and houses at Louisville and Saratoga, in his plantation below Natchez, was never acutely visible. He took it all, he took life, with a good-natured acceptance bare of eagerness or curiosity. The truth was he gave the effect of indolence, mental and physical: it was recognized that his mind was of a very high order, his physical endurance was tremendous, and yet he never exerted, he hardly ever used, either. He sat on his long portico, with its file of high, slender, square columns and watched his sleek horses at grass; his gaze went farther to his distant woods and the vague silver of streams; for hours he would neither move nor speak. Instead, he drank.

His reputation was far in excess of his accomplishments; it exceeded, really, all apparent justification . . . unless it was the reward of his candor. Saxegotha Laws was sixty-eight when he died, and it would have been impossible to discover anyone who distrusted him. Like Wicklow, the state of Kentucky was his pasture. He made, at times, a comment which seemed to be the expression, entirely cheerful, of a deep inner conviction — he insisted that he had been ruined by happiness. Whenever he said that in the hearing of his wife she, equally cheerful, immediately objected. "It doesn't sound like anything," she would explain; "but Mr. Laws means it. I hate to hear him say it." Usually, then, he would take a drink of what — in the whole face of the times — he persisted in calling a whisky sling. The word julep he wouldn't, or couldn't, adopt. "Yes," he would repeat, "I was ruined by happiness." Lord Slieve once asked him:

"Just what was ruined, Mr. Laws?"

"I couldn't tell you," he admitted; "you would have to understand a great deal more than can be seen today. You'd need to know what Lexington was like in Eighteen twenty. Lexington Station," he added, apparently for his own satisfaction. "I can't see anything that looks even remotely like ruin," Slieve added, gazing about the great hall at Vermiliana. It had a wide polished ash floor with Persian rugs, there was an impressive fireplace, formal paintings of men and women and horses, lithographs of momentous sporting events, English furniture — the air and presence of a great deal of money. Mrs. Laws was a small woman, and very fat; with her extravagant ballooned skirt she looked like a child in an adult costume. But her eyes were black and fine; she had traces, flashes, of a willful charm. She spoke with the calm security of a woman accustomed to admiration. It could be discovered in her bearing that the luxury about them had come through herself.

Everyone knew it had — Saxegotha Laws had been scrupulous in the administration of her affairs, but no more. His wife's money increased because it was well invested and not from any activity or ability of his. They were, in reality, exceedingly rich. Fortunately he wasn't self-conscious about it; he had — although never wasteful — very little regard for money as a fact in itself. Laws had no social ambition. His wife and three daughters attended to that. His only son, Ursin, had been thrown and killed in a purse race at the age of fourteen. He dressed, usually, in white or brown linens, without attention; a narrow black tie was carelessly disposed; his

hair was rough and fell forward across a fine forehead. Lord Slieve, who spent the American racing-season between Kentucky and Saratoga and the rest of the year with his wife and family in Ireland, argued heatedly with Mrs. Laws about her husband's appearance. Slieve insisted it couldn't be better.

Lucy Laws was favorable to a greater neatness. She didn't exactly bother Saxegotha about it, but her opinion was always ready. She could never resist the temptation to straighten his tie or put back his hair. In the ball-room of the United States Hotel at Saratoga she would privately remonstrate with him. "Really, Mr. Laws, you mustn't swing women around like that. You will break them off at the waist. This isn't a Kentucky reel. And do, for heaven's sake, put your hair back." She'd say this with an affection that robbed it of sharpness, but she would say it. Laws would make a perfunctory thrust at his hair and promise to dance with more restraint; but within ten minutes the hair would be down again and he'd swing his partner with a vigor that set her to gasping. He danced like that — the waltz, for him, was always a reel. No one but Lucy, the truth was, actually objected to it: women were extraordinarily attracted to him. They were often quite shameless — his wife said — but there he was utterly without response.

He liked women, but he liked them all . . . and none, except Lucy and his daughters. He gave the others no more than a complete courtesy; drunk, he became even more formal. It was impossible to say whether this was a most refreshing instance of his character or deliberate decision. A return and acknowledgment, in a way, of his

wife's superior worldly possessions. Certainly if it hadn't been for his dress she would have had nothing to complain about. However, she could never make up her mind, she said, if he were the best husband in the world or no husband at all. It was obvious that she was puzzled by her own remark; it was clear too, at times, that she would have welcomed a more resisting — a more interested — spirit in him. In the last days of his life he talked an uncommon lot to Slieve, when no one else was present; Slieve never referred to their conversations; and when he died the Irishman frankly and loudly wept.

After the funeral Mrs. Laws sat in her bedroom tightly holding Lord Slieve's hand. The wall-paper was in the new taste, bouquets of realistic violets tied and looped with ribbons; the furniture was black, decorated with geometrical gilt lines, in the general effect of pagodas. She said suddenly and unexpectedly: "He was right; but it wasn't happiness — I ruined him." Her son-in-law promptly answered that that was nonsense. "You haven't a thing to regret. Your life together was perfect." She shook her head. "I ruined him," she repeated. Mrs. Laws fell into a deep reverie. She continued to hold his hand, and Slieve sat motionless. Slow clear tears rolled down over her fat cheeks. "I was remembering," she said simply. "I have been married to Mr. Laws forty-nine years. It was forty-nine years ago, in the summer, I first saw him at Lexington. I thought he was the funniest-looking boy in the world. And then, all at once, in a minute, I was in love with him. I didn't even know Ursin Bouligny was around. I was staying with Aurelia Brinsmede."

In that past, Slieve reflected, lost for almost half a century, Saxegotha Laws had been eighteen years old.

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Dr. Overton was leaving the bare general assembly-room of the building that had once formed the entire Transylvania Seminary. It was the old college hall now, and the seminary was a university; great changes, improvements, had happened, contemporaneous with the new president, Dr. Holly. Overton had been conferring with John Roche, the professor of Latin and Greek, and Sharpe, who had just come into the academic department; and, descending the steps to Second Street, amused by the expressions of Sharpe's Scotch humor, he met a tall solemn boy in amazing clothes and carrying two large bundles wrapped in stained calico. The boy, in a pleasant confident voice, said: "Good-evening." He had on buckskin breeches and moccasins, leggins laced with leather thongs, a linsey hunting-shirt, and, although the day was hot, a great cap of bearskin. His belt was dyed vermilion and in it he carried a heavy knife. He put the bundles down. "Good-evening," he repeated. Overton said good-evening.

"I'm looking for Transylvania," the solemn boy went on; "and this is it." Dr. Overton agreed that it was. "I came here to get learned." Sharpe and John Roche joined them. "He came to get learned," Overton explained to the others. "You did, and why?" Sharpe demanded. "From the romantic looks of you, at your age, I should think you'd be absolutely contented. Who wouldn't?" He

wasn't, he replied. "I want to see about getting into the University," he proceeded; "I want to see the right men." The right men, Roche asserted, might well be those immediately before him. "The question is," Sharpe put in, "are you the right boy?" He said emphatically, without a trace of humor, that he was. "Come in and we will find out." Sharpe turned to Overton and Roche. "We'll go on with this at once," he explained gravely. "He is lucky to have found us together and with the time to spare." Again in the assembly-room, the three professors sat facing the very young and serious candidate for learning.

"What is your name?" Dr. Overton asked. It was, he discovered, Saxegotha Laws. "Well, Saxegotha," Roche went on, "what preparation have you for entering the University? How far has your education been carried?" Not far enough, Laws was afraid. "But I can catch up. I have had two years of schooling on Drake's Creek, and I've read the Bible, most of it. I know Rippon's Collection of Hymns and Dilworth's Spelling Book to the back, Littleton's Dialogues of the Dead and Essays on the Powers and Susceptibilities of the Human Mind for Religion." It was fortunate, Sharpe asserted, that he had made himself familiar with the latter. It had become overwhelmingly important at Transylvania University. Roche continued. "It might be useful if I outlined the requirements for admission: the ability to write Latin grammatically; you must be well versed in Walsh's Arithmetic; Cicero's Select Orations and the Bucolics, the Georgics and the Æneid of Virgil; Sallust; the Greek Testament and Dalzell's Collectanea Græca Majora; and geography — Morse's, Worcester's, or Cummings's."

"I can catch up," Saxegotha Laws repeated. His voice had lost no shade of its confidence. "Yes, but when?" Dr. Overton inquired; "in ten years, twenty, forty?" A month ought to do it, Laws thought. Sharpe asked: "What do you carry that knife for?" John Roche answered briefly: "It's a scalping-knife." Saxegotha, however, added that it could be used for a great number of things. "I am glad of that," Sharpe acknowledged. "Since there is a possibility of your entering my class, I am relieved to find you use it for other purposes than scalping. If you have an inclination in that direction, I hope it will be limited to students. Speaking unofficially, I should like to see you in the University. It is my opinion you would add to it. Lift the purely academic monotony. But there is another question, slightly more delicate — to be frank, are you provided with funds? Are you able to pay for your courses and maintain yourself in Lexington?" Laws indicated one of his two bundles. "With that," he said. "It ought to be enough. Twenty pounds of the best tobacco leaf in Kentucky." The three professors were greatly engaged. "Let me understand you," Dr. Overton proceeded; "you expect to pay for your education with tobacco. The best tobacco leaf in Kentucky." The boy nodded. "I have some cut silver, too; but not much." He drew from his pocket a small handful of silver dollars cut into various smaller fragments and values. Overton rose. "I am going to take you to Dr. Holly," he said. "You must tell him exactly what you have told us. If I know anything about him," he turned to the other professors, "he will see that Saxegotha is learned at once."

Later Laws came out of the impressive new main build-

ing of the University and strolled across the college lawn. There were pleasant paths and flowering bushes and wide expanses of bright grass. Around it the town was loosely gathered, little dwellings of wood and dwellings of brick set back in simple gardens, under catalpa and sugar and buckeye trees. A number of boys were playing on a fives alley improvised against a wall of the building he had first entered. As he approached, there was a cry: "Here is Daniel Boone!" A small crowd gathered before him in mock amazement and admiration. "Look at the scalping-knife wet with Shawanese blood. And the moccasins. He's pigeon-toed in them just like an Indian. A bearskin hat! It took a whole bear to make that." A dark youth in cloth trousers, a blue coat with silver buttons, and an immaculate cambric neckcloth, asked, in a smooth drawling voice, his name.

"Saxegotha Laws," he echoed; "that is not a name; it's a fact in English history. Don't try to be funny." Saxegotha said firmly that he was not being funny. "That's my name and it was my grandfather's too." He had a steady grey gaze and it hardened and grew more direct. "What was your father's name?" the dark boy persisted. "Go to where he is buried in the woods and find out," Laws replied. A heavier youth came forward. "You must be more polite to Mr. Bouligny," he said. "Mr. Ursin Bouligny is a gentleman, from New Orleans; he is not used to rough characters."

In an instant Laws had him by the throat; a silent brutal fight began. There were few blows — they staggered in a clenched struggle, and then fell, twisting desperately, on the grass. Streaks of blood appeared; their

faces were smeared with mud. Neither showed any mastery until there was a harsh agonized cry. "He's digging my eye out!" The surrounding boys at once fell upon Laws, beating and dragging at him. They succeeded in wrenching him to his feet. Bouligny spoke for them:

"This is a university and not the wilderness. Naturally gouging isn't allowed among us. Let me tell you if you had cut Parry Gist's eye out I would have shot you myself. Give me your knife." Laws gave it to him. "For me," Bouligny went on, "I can see that I like you. This is Adolphe Mazereau, he comes from New Orleans, too, and we are boarding at Timothy Smith's." Mazereau, as well, was dark and dressed with elegance. Ursin Bouligny deliberately broke Laws's knife on a convenient stone. "You can borrow my pistols when you need them." Parry Gist came up to Laws. "I can't remember your name," he acknowledged; "but it is a good name. I am at Postlewaite's Tavern, and if you will come with me we can have all the whisky slings there are." Another addressed him: "I'm Dabney Carr and Lexington is where I live. I think Saxelaws Gotha is a wonderful name." He was contradicted from the gathering: "It's Gothelaws Saxe." A tremendous argument rose; the syllables of Laws's name were shouted on a confusion of young voices; in the end they all went to Postlewaite's for whisky slings to unlimited amount.

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Ursin Bouligny again explained the flaw in Saxegotha's philosophy. "You don't really know what getting learned

is," he insisted. "Learning is a lot of things. Not just books and study. It's finding out about life." Mazereau interrupted him. "You mean knowing about women." Saxegotha agreed that that was what Ursin had meant. "I don't want to know them," he went on. "At least not for a long while. They're useless. I won't go out to the Brinsmedes' tonight and I won't go to Vauxhall. I can't afford to and I don't like it." He turned definitely away from that subject to the making of ink with ink powder. Then, with a ruler and a sharpened piece of lead, he drew lines on blank sheets of exercise paper. "You can do it," he explained; "that's all right. I'm not even in the University yet; only summer school. I have to work like the devil while you just go to lectures and drive around in your gig. You may have all New Orleans behind you, but I only have the woods. You can remember I don't say I want to get learned any more either." That, Bouligny promised, they would not forget. What, he asked Saxegotha Laws, had he thought of doing when he left Lexington?

"I don't know," Laws admitted; "I'll have to have an education to find out. I won't teach; I can see that much. Politics maybe. I'm certain I could get into the Kentucky Legislature from my district. I'd have to go back there and live. But it's as safe as Lexington now . . . and almost as easy. I don't know," he repeated, but the intentness of his expression contradicted the indecision in his words. Telmak, Bouligny's negro servant, said that the gig was waiting. "You might at least come with us this afternoon," Ursin persisted. Horses, Saxegotha replied, were even farther from his plans than women. "Perhaps, ten or twelve years from now, I may be married; but I'll never

own a race horse. I am not interested in race horses. I can't gamble on the races." However, when Adolphe Mazereau and Bouligny left, in their most impressive trousers and green coats, Saxegotha didn't return immediately to the lesson book on the table before him.

He was thinking of the extraordinary variety of scenes and people that had come into his life. A different world from the settlement along Drake's Creek. Then his mind returned to Ursin's question. Saxegotha Laws wanted, the truth was, to be a statesman. Just what form, what position, that would take he wasn't sure of: he thought of the House of Representatives and then of the Senate. His imagination, for the present, carried him no further. In politics he was, of course, a follower of Jefferson's democracy; there was a strong Federalistic influence at Transylvania University, a majority of the trustees were Federal sympathizers; and he ostentatiously wore on his cap — the bearskin hat had become both too hot and inconvenient — the tricolor of liberty. He didn't, in his heart, approve of Lexington; in it, he considered, luxury had run riot. There were horse-races for money and Usher's Theatre and an amazing number of taverns; there were always idle girls, always in their Sunday clothes, on the streets. He didn't approve of that, of them, at all. His memories and affections were attached to far different feminine beings — little girls, girls, women, who were eternally laboring. He saw his mother in calico, or worse, carrying the heavy buckets of ashes and boiling lye for soap; she carded wool and swingled flax and bleached the linen . . . leaden wet burdens. The humming of the wheel was in his ears now. He saw her in the dim light of

tallow dips bending over johnny-cake, baking on an ash board, hanging the kettle for bohea tea on its log pole. Her only moments of peace came with sleep or the singing, in an uncertain quavering voice, from Rippon's book of hymns in the short evening.

The girls of Lexington, he instinctively felt, were lost in worldliness and sin; they thought, Saxegotha was persuaded, of nothing but clothes and pleasure. He saw them at Mathurin Giron's confectionery on Mill Street and in companies on the lawn of the Lexington Female Seminary, and they were always giggling or engaged in doubtful whispers. They had, however, no part in his life. He devoted little attention to them. He went to a class — it was held in Trotter's warehouse — and when he returned, Ursin and Mazereau were back from the races. Ursin had won four hundred dollars and was in a great good humor. He said to Saxegotha: "You are going with us to the Brinsmedes' tonight." Saxegotha said that he wasn't. Bouligny, Adolphe explained, had stopped at Keen's Tavern, at Postlewaite's, at the Free and Easy, and Wilson's Tavern, and he was in a determined mood. He became, in fact, disagreeable. "Very well," he declared; "I give you up. You won't act and live decently, you have no feeling of self-respect and decent society, and you can go to the devil. You're exactly what you were when you first came to the University and you'll never be anything different."

"Yes, I will," Laws asserted. "You are the one who won't change. I don't agree with you, either, about decent society. You can hardly call it that in Lexington . . . with nothing but parties and places like Vauxhall. Why,

damn it, the girls will smile at you right on the street." Ursin thanked God that they would. "But they are laughing at you. At first you were a novelty, fresh from the backwoods, but now it's getting to be a nuisance." Laws slept in a small dark chamber that opened from Ursin Bouligny's sitting-room, and he rose abruptly and disappeared. Ursin called: "Where have you gone? What are you doing?" There was no reply, but in a very few minutes Saxegotha Laws reappeared with his scanty possessions tied together. "I don't belong here," he said. "I've known it all the time. I am too different from Adolphe and you. People laugh at me on the street. I'm going." Bouligny cried:

"Going! You are not going by another step. Don't be so ridiculous and sensitive. Mazereau and I are devoted to you and you know it. If we weren't, I ask you, would we bother about what you did and how you looked? Am I a man with a taste for impertinence?" Mazereau was so affected by sentiment and drink that he sobbed noisily. "Don't let Saxegotha leave," he begged Bouligny; "I'll stay home with him and you can go and kiss Aurelia Brinsmede." Ursin pointed out that he didn't want to kiss Aurelia. "You know very well, Adolphe, I am interested in the other one, the girl from Savannah. Lucy Challen. Saxegotha, that was the real reason I wanted you to go tonight. I want you to see Lucy. I am serious."

"If I do stay, if I do go," Saxegotha Laws asked, "will that be enough? Will you stop bothering me about it?" Ursin Bouligny solemnly promised that he would never again urge Laws to leave his sacred books and lectures. "Now," he added cheerfully, "we will inspect your

clothes for the evening." They were soon viewed — a fustian roundabout, too short in the sleeves, trousers of cheap Marseilles, boots fastened with copper nails, and a shirt of coarse homespun linen. Adolphe said: "I think the other, the buckskin and red belt and bear hat, would be better." Ursin was inclined to support him. "It is more picturesque." Laws couldn't agree with them. He would look, he asserted, like an illumination or a parade. Telmak blacked his boots. Adolphe Mazereau arranged the semblance of a stock at Saxegotha's throat. "I can't breathe," he complained; "and specially I can't drink." A bottle was procured at once and the fallacy of that belief exhibited. "You will see Dr. Holly," Ursin instructed him, "so don't be too democratic. The Brinsmedes and the Doctor are all Federalists. Can you dance?" Saxegotha Laws admitted that he had danced, and more than once — a reel, with his brother. "This will be different," Ursin went on. "You may have to dance with a girl." Saxegotha hoped not. "I hope not. I wasn't brought up to it." But he needn't bother about that, he reflected; even the girls of Lexington were not forward enough to propose dancing to him. He would make no such idiotic advance.

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THE great size and luxury of Caea Brinsmede's house, Cherry Hill at Versailles, amazed Saxegotha Laws — he had had no idea that rooms could be at once so large and filled with beautiful things. The chairs and sofas were all covered with red and looked comfortable; the rugs were deep and as soft as grass; in every room there was a

marble mantel and high mirror in gold above the fireplace. He recognized such things in odd moments; Saxegotha was principally engaged in avoiding people who might speak to him; he kept as far as possible from Ursin and Mazereau. He had never before been so near so many women: their skirts brushed against him, their low murmur filled his ears, the air was heavy with scent. Wherever he gazed, there were white shoulders, shoulders as white and smooth as the marble of the mantels. Banks of candles shone on red India shawls, on green and white turbans glittering, he realized, with jewels, and gold and black enamelled neck-chains and bracelets and pins. When, quickly, he looked down from bare fragrant shoulders he saw silken ankles and incredible little feet scarcely covered with silk slippers.

Dr. Holly, with a glass of wine, recognized him and spoke courteously. "Laws, I am glad to find you can escape from study." He presented Saxegotha Laws to Mrs. Brinsmede. "This is Kentucky," he continued, "and, as you see, it is still young." Laws said bluntly: "I came with Ursin Bouligny. Ursin and Mazereau gave me their word I wouldn't have to do it again." Holly laughed, but Mrs. Brinsmede was tactful and serious. "I hope you like it better than you sound and come back. You must find Mr. Bouligny and meet some girls. There will be dancing after supper." He turned unceremoniously away. This was not his life; he had no liking for the people about him. It was all just as he had suspected from the glimpses he'd had of it on the streets — light and aimless. Dr. Holly, who was the head of Transylvania University, had no right to be drinking wine in a bright blue coat with gold buttons and

a collar that almost hid his ears. The University, learning, were serious facts. At supper it happened that Saxegotha Laws was seated across the table from the Doctor, and he listened with a critical reserve to what he said. Dr. Holly was talking with an easy fluency, his obvious gravity expressed with humor.

"The trouble," he said, "is with the good Presbyterians, and if sectarianism is not brought to an end in the University the University will suffer. It did under Toulnim. Seriously. It isn't too much to say that it may be ruined. The situation is no better than an exchange of personalities: the Kentucky Reporter attacks me, the Todds support it, and Mr. Breckenridge speaks in my favor; Professor Bishop distinctly smells brimstone after I have been in his classroom. Education is an impersonal affair: it must be held above party and even religious differences. If I have any power in Lexington I will keep it there. I have an enormous ambition for Transylvania University. But as a university. Look," he said, "at the Presbyterians — Dr. Rankin wanted the Old Psalms of David and others would have nothing but Watts's version; it reached a point where Rankin was accused of denying communion to the supporters of Watts. He had to withdraw and found another church. The Weekly Recorder, in Cincinnati, calls me a Socinian. What does that matter? What, even, does it mean? My concern is with philology, belles-lettres, and mental philosophy. I am complained about because I like pleasure. Mr. Laws, don't you like pleasure?"

"No," Saxegotha Laws replied, startled by the suddenness of the question. But he answered at once. "Learning

is serious. There is no time for pleasure." He spoke positively. "When I was home, there was too much to do, and now there is more." Dr. Holly said pleasantly: "Mr. Laws, I am certain we should all be obliged if you would tell us something about your home. I have an idea it is very different from Lexington."

"It is," Laws asserted. "You wouldn't like it. It would be too hard for you. At least, the way it was. Drake's Creek has changed too. When we got there, it was just nothing but a buckeye grove. When we were building a cabin, we lived in the cane. Afterwards we cleared thirty-eight acres. I was eight years old and helped my father. We were too poor to hire a man. I plowed and put up a brush fence. When I was fourteen I could cut and split seventy-five blue-ash rails in a day. Honey locust was harder. You had to heat the ax blade. The Indians came over from the north side of the river. In the morning I climbed up into the loft to see if any were waiting outside for us to open the door. The first summer there was a little corn and a truck patch. We had sweet turnips, raw most of the time, and pumpkin molasses and hickory nuts. We were sick of eating deer and wild turkey. Then it got so we could have tea and cure a gammon of bacon." He stopped, looking down the brilliant intent length of the table. "You wouldn't like it," he repeated, ending abruptly, to Dr. Holly.

Ursin and Adolphe Mazereau, it developed after supper, were greatly pleased with him. They presented him, as the heroic pioneer, to Aurelia and Pleasant Brinsmede and a disagreeable child who openly laughed at his appearance. "Saxegotha is one of my best friends," Ursin reproved

her. "You must be specially nice and dance with him." Laws said hastily that he didn't dance. "He does," Bouligny told Lucy Challen. "He means that he doesn't want to dance with you. I am not surprised." Laws, however, was amazed at the girl Ursin Bouligny had spoken about so seriously. She couldn't be fourteen years old. She was thin and small and pale . . . the only thing noticeable was black and staring eyes. "Don't you want to dance with me?" she demanded. He answered promptly that he did not. "Then you must," she decided. "He must, Ursin. If he refuses I won't see you for a week." Bouligny turned to Saxegotha Laws. "She means it," he explained. "You are one of my closest friends." They were standing in the hall, and there was music, the scrape of fiddles, from a room beyond.

She was so light that Saxegotha Laws swept her from her feet. He danced facing her, holding her hands, and he saw that she was entirely out of breath. "You mustn't . . . you'll break me off in the middle," she half gasped. She recovered and her gaze was sparkling and malicious. He had never, Laws thought, seen a more horrid little girl. "I have forgotten your name already," she proceeded; "but I want to talk to you. Come over here." Lucy Challen took him by the hand and led him to the bottom of a stair. She sat down while he remained standing. "Why don't you like me?" Saxegotha answered her question precisely. "Because you are useless. You can't do anything. Except dance. Probably you don't know anything."

"I can't," she admitted at once; "and I don't. But I'll never have to bother. I have an enormous amount of

money. I can spend my life dancing." That, he said indifferently, was the thing for her to do. She gathered her skirt about her knees. "Sit down." He didn't want to sit down. "It doesn't matter whether you want to or not," she explained; "I want you to. I can't talk to you like this because it gives me a crick in the neck. Anyhow, you have been rude long enough." Laws sat on the step below her because it was easier than a further argument. He couldn't, on account of Ursin, leave her entirely. "At first," she admitted, "I thought you were dreadful, but now I don't. I like your face, it's so brown, and you have a nice mouth, only you must tell me your name again." She repeated it. "Saxegotha. It couldn't be more perfectly right for you." He gazed at her somberly. Thin ankles, in white silk, and slippers that barely covered the line of her toes. The immature body of a child. Suddenly she pressed the warm palm of her hand to his face. It was faintly perfumed.

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He woke suddenly in the dark of the night with the impression that a hand had been laid on his mouth. It hadn't, yet he was distinctly conscious of a faint fragrance. Saxegotha Laws fell asleep again with a vague sense of disturbance; when he got up, Bouligny and Adolphe Mazereau were, naturally, still deep in slumber — Telmak brought them coffee at noon — and he had a breakfast of cold johnny-cake and milk. Dr. Sharpe had an early lecture; as usual he was in a high good humor. He said: "Among the more important late deliberations of the faculty of this classic outpost are several resolutions

directly concerned with the students. With the students, that is, in class. The students strictly considered as students. At all other times —" he waved an arm, indicative of the completest freedom. "We hope this will not be regarded as too Federalistic for the democratic body of Transylvania University. However, it has occurred to us that the appearance, at least, of relative nicety would be served if the members of classes removed their hats in the lecture rooms. Another is more involved — is it, we wonder, necessary when a class is standing at recitation for it to lean largely on the shoulders convenient to it? In other words, is a class a variety of parasite like the wild grapevine?"

Saxegotha Laws, wholly addressed to learning, paid him no attention: Sharpe might talk like that for the whole hour. Or recite, in an accentuation of his native burr, the light-headed poetry of Robert Burns. A writer, Laws considered, lost to all approval through his fondness for women. For girls. Lucy Challen, a thoroughly unpleasant child, came into his mind. He hoped, for the sake of Ursin's future peace, that he wouldn't be successful with her. It would be ruinous to marry Lucy Challen . . . with her staring black eyes and enormous amount of money. He, Saxegotha, never wanted to see her again. She represented everything he disapproved of. For example, her hand was so soft, so little, that it could never do a useful thing. He doubted if it could guide a strand of flax. There was something fatally wrong with a world that produced such a girl. Lucy Challen, he considered, was the exact pattern of the waste, the economic monoply, that had brought about the French Revolution.

It would never become imminent in the United States; there had, perhaps, been such a danger, under Washington — who saw himself in the light of a king — and Alexander Hamilton; but the influence of Jefferson, the increasing weight of democracy in General Jackson, must make it forever impossible. Politically and socially Lucy Challen belonged to the past, to the Colonies; there was no place for her, for arbitrary enormous amounts of money, in the present.

Courts and inequality and tyranny were rapidly passing away; luxury would soon be looked on as a disgrace. The voice of God was speaking with the accents of the people. There was a stir about him — the class had risen, the lecture was over. He hadn't heard a word of it. Ursin Bouligny, in a dressing-gown of orange silk, was moving about the sitting-room when he returned. Bouligny regarded him silently, a coffee-cup in his hand. Adolphe Mazereau was silent too. Laws said cheerfully: "A brace of headaches." Bouligny sank with a despondent Creole grace into a chair. "Nothing," he said to Mazereau, "could stand against his damnable honesty." Laws asked what the devil he was talking about. Adolphe told him:

"It can't be you are as innocent as you seem. Ursin begged you to go to the Brinsmedes' and meet a girl he was serious about, a girl he passionately loved; you knew that and what did you do? Why — you monopolized her, you carried her away from everyone. Did you go home with us? No. Did you realize we had gone? No. Did you make an effort to see Ursin, to explain, when you returned? No. And then you speak lightly about a brace of

headaches." Saxegotha Laws was both amazed and impatient. "I couldn't get away from her," he protested; "when I found you had gone I was mad because you had left me. I didn't want to say a word to her. I don't see how she could be worse. She's a crime in a democratic country." Bouligny nodded. "Saxegotha means it," he told Adolphe. "Or he thinks he means it. He means it now. That is why I can do nothing." What, Laws demanded, was there to do. "In proceeding with your education as a gentleman," Mazereau explained, "you must realize that certain situations demand certain courses. Any question of a woman between men of honor must be settled with pistols. Now you are a man of honor and at the same time you are not. Your honesty, as Bouligny said, spoils everything. There can be no question of a duel."

"You're not a brace of headaches, but a pair of crazy Frenchmen; French or Spanish, it doesn't matter which," Laws declared. "Do I have to tell you again I hate that girl?" Bouligny changed from drinking coffee to drinking brandy. "You will marry her," he asserted. "No," Adolphe corrected him, "she will marry Saxegotha. Saxegotha, you are as good as married to her now." Laws laughed indignantly. He turned his back on the absurdity of their conversation. By the middle of the afternoon Ursin was drunk, later he was beaten into insensibility by a bookmaker at the race course on Broadway, and the following morning he was philosophical and, he explained, permanently embittered.

Saxegotha Laws was, now, amused by him; the whole affair, Lucy Challen, had become a joke. He saw her going into Mathurin Giron's with Pleasant Brinsmede;

she called to him, but he kept steadily on his way, and told Ursin and Adolphe about it afterwards. They listened enveloped in an air of deep melancholy. It was, Adolphe proceeded, the saddest case he knew of — the destruction of an upright young statesman, a heroic pioneer, by love. "You will be rich and lazy and race horses." Laws said he was sick of hearing the name Lucy. They were in the taproom of the Don't Give Up The Ship, drinking slings, and he was emphatic. He repeated again his single ambition. "I am going to Washington with General Jackson." Then he fell into a moody silence. There was a thin breath of scent about his head. It was damned annoying; he drank to banish it, but, he thought, it grew stronger. Lucy Challen mocked him with glittering eyes. Personally he liked large fair girls whose eyes were blue. When he did marry, it would be a girl who had some size to her, a comfortable girl, with blue eyes. He preferred blue eyes and said so.

A new rope-walk was opening on East Main Street; there was a barrel of punch outside, a pole erected with a liberty cap, and Saxegotha Laws spoke at length to the gathered crowd about the sacred responsibilities of freedom. "America," he said, "following the noble example of France, has chosen to be a government by majority. It will have no black-eyed tyranny. The silk slippers of oppression will never stamp it into the grass. Transylvania University and Lexington and Kentucky will end Federal hopes. The time must come, it is here, when the black cockade will vanish. Black eyes of another variety. Andrew Jackson and blue eyes. Money and power will be regulated. Girls will be regulated —" He was inter-

rupted by a shout of approval. Someone, in the excitement, contrived to get a leg into the punch barrel, and he was pitched out of the throng.

"Red chairs and mirrors and gilt and marble . . . undemocratic!" Saxegotha Laws cried. "Dancing and horse-racing must stop. Socinian presidents and horses." Ursin, with an arm around his throat, dragged him into comparative obscurity. "You are drunk," he said coldly; "you weren't talking politics, but about Lucy Challen. I shall have to kill you yet." Laws was surprisingly quiet. He seemed dazed. In their common sitting-room he collapsed on a table, his face buried in the sleeves of his meager coat.

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A FORMLESS depression settled upon him; he worked harder and longer, and understood less; his recitations were meaningless — mechanical repetitions of words laboriously acquired. The weather was beautiful, hot and still; the fields were deep with white clover and green with wild rye; there were lilies in the fringes of the woods, columbines and sweet wild hyacinths and cardinal flowers; the moon was increasing. Laws read late at night, leaning listlessly forward on his elbows over Ferguson on optics. He heard the town watchman calling the hours: three o'clock . . . four. He was, he decided, sick; he had been poisoned. For the first time in Saxegotha Laws's life he felt weak; his arms were heavy, his legs ached. He had, however, stopped the talk about Lucy Challen; at last he had made it clear to Adolphe and Ursin Bouligny that any reference to her, and to marriage, annoyed him.

If they discussed it, he asserted sharply, he would move away at once.

Privately, he was infuriated at himself — it was absurd to dislike a mere girl so bitterly. Lucy Challen wasn't important to him; he would never see her again — except, it might be, on the street — she had absolutely no part in his life. Laws told himself that she had nothing to do with his present feeling. He was sick. It was, however, a peculiar sickness: he had no desire to be cured; his depression was largely a fog of indifference. His ambitions, the objects of his hopes, receded into it until they were almost obscured. Lost. He drank inattentively; whisky had little effect on him; except, perhaps, to make him increasingly somber and detached.

Ursin and Adolphe Mazereau seemed immaterial, remote; they talked for hours about nothing; they went on errands with nothing as their ends, to parties and Vauxhall and the races of the Lexington Jockey Club on the new grounds at Ashland. They spoke of three-mile heats in eight fifteen and six ten, heats of a mile in one fifty-one and one fifty-three. Mere jargon. He walked by himself, in the evening, along the Elkhorn where it flowed through the pastoral town, by the nigger pens on Main Street, beyond the paper-mills and tobacco-factories, the powder-magazines and distilleries, out into the country. He'd walk over the Richmond turnpike, and, passing from the darkness of groves into fields wide and grey under the moon, renewed memories of his difficult and happy childhood followed him:

The sharp scent of winter grapes; the prized white berries of mistletoe and the red berries of Indian arrow-

wood; snowbirds and feeding the horse and the cow and pigs in the morning with the last of the moonlight on the snow. They hurried to put out all the washtubs and buckets to catch passing showers. The hollowed log under the back eaves was for faces and hands. Ink, then, they made from oak bark and copperas. Bear-grease lamps and buffalo-tallow candles. His memory went back further, to the long journey from the north . . . Red Stone Old Fort, with Corryell's Ferry on the Delaware and Harris's Ferry on the Susquehanna. They had been too poor to stop at the taverns. Four hundred miles in wagons, but the flatboats of the Ohio River were better. Johnson's Fork of Licking and Bryant's Station near Lexington. Phrases returned to him — August corn in the silk. Green corn and milk for breakfast. Corn huskings with the ears in a long rick. Whisky in a two-quart green glass bottle with a cob for stopper. Dry corn pounded with an iron wedge on the hominy block. A boy on a plow horse in an agony with his legs full of Spanish needles. A boy following the sheep bells in the woods, in a heap with the young lambs by the hearth. A boy in a schoolhouse with no windows but strips of oiled paper between the logs; a shrill fluctuating chorus studying out loud. A boy in butternut linsey with scarlet mittens and a dog named Lion.

He roused himself impatiently from this introspective and sentimental mood: Laws addressed himself with a fresh energy to his studying; but that gathered energy soon subsided. It couldn't, he told himself, be the result of one evening with a girl. No matter how much he hated her. As a fact, he didn't hate her; Lucy Challen wasn't

close enough to him for that. She was no more than a disagreeable girl he had met once. There was nothing in her appearance either to remember or to forget. Except her eyes. If he didn't soon recover, Saxegotha Laws realized, he would have to leave the University. He was useless as he was. Perhaps if he saw her again:

It was Wednesday, the night when Vauxhall was illuminated, and, with a careful show of indifference, he asked Ursin what he intended to do that evening. "Why, go to Vauxhall, of course," Bouligny told him. "There is to be a party as usual. But it's no good to invite you. I have had to explain that to the Brinsmedes a dozen times." A sudden incomprehensible fear that Lucy Challen had left Lexington invaded Laws. "Who is going?" he asked. Ursin Bouligny replied: "Well, Lucy is. But she is leaving for Savannah tomorrow. You might begin your social career again after that." Laws said: "I feel like the devil. I can't read. I can't even sit still. You may see me at Vauxhall later." Ursin made no comment. At nine o'clock Saxegotha left Timothy Smith's for the public garden. The night was both hot and bright; his clothes were awkward and uncomfortable. He wished that he had white linen like Ursin and Adolphe, linen and fine cambric shirts scented with sprigs of lavender. They were so much more comfortable than his own clumsy materials. He wouldn't, naturally, look as well as Ursin Bouligny . . . he wasn't so dark and graceful. Ursin's hands were thin and fine, but his were like boards.

There was, after all, a certain distinction in being what was recognized as a gentleman; a quality, a state, that came with ease and money. Perhaps with birth. He be-

gan to appreciate Ursin Bouligny's delicate consideration . . . except in the brief affair about Lucy Challen. Even then — Ursin had been in love with her — he had behaved admirably. He had very high obligations of conduct — courage and honor. There was honor and courage on Drake's Creek, but it was very different, the circumstances were different and ugly. Drake's Creek knew nothing about the romance of love. It burned for a moment, for a week or a month, and then it was lost in hardship, in purely practical considerations. Love was never talked about. It was regarded, when it was thought of at all, as indecent. That was too bad. Ursin's way was better.

Vauxhall, he suddenly saw, was directly before him: the trees were illuminated with hundreds of candles suspended in small colored glass globes — the red and purple and orange and mysterious blue lights were subdued by the flood of the moon. He paid the admission and instantly he was enveloped in a charmed air: there was music and an uncertain glow; men and girls passed him two and two on the narrow paths; the girls had floating white dresses and low eager voices; they looked up into the faces of the men with them. The music wasn't the swinging reels, the violent strains, he was familiar with — it was like the echo of music, music he might have dreamed. His sense of trouble vanished; its place was taken by an increasing happiness. He walked slowly, with his wool hat in his hand, his thin face lifted to the night. A struggle had stopped within him, a vain rebellion come to an end. Soon, he knew, he would find Ursin and Adolphe, Pleasant and Aurelia Brinsmede, and Lucy Challen. She was going away tomorrow. The further

effect of that realization was instantaneous — he increased his pace until it was hardly short of a run. His heart pounded with fear. He must find her. Keep her from going to Savannah. The rest, the world outside Vauxhall garden, was nothing.

VIII.

EIGHT

Of all the wide variety of rooms in the President's Mansion, Martin Van Buren told himself, the one they were now occupying was liked best by the General. Here he was more nearly at ease than elsewhere. He had never seen Jackson in the perfection of that state: the old man was too much torn by the bitter vigor of his convictions and impulses for actual repose. But at least, in their present surroundings, he would sit for short periods of silence, meditatively smoking his pipe. The room was small and bare; the walls were undecorated and slightly stained by rain; there was a couch, a common desk, a table, and ordinary straight chairs. General Jackson said that it recalled the days of his military campaigns. That time, Van Buren realized, was over for the General; there would be no more stirring affairs like the Florida raid and the defeat of Packenham before New Orleans; the fire of his spirit was not less intolerantly bright, but, together with his late sickness and age, it was destroying his body.

However, he sat erect, his knees together, with one hand upon them and one at the reed stem of the pipe. Dressed, as usual, in careful black, a seal on his watch ribbon, he had unbuttoned part of his waistcoat, exposing a moderate white ruffle; his long, narrow face, bigoted and clean-shaven, was dark with thought. His dark blue gaze was

intent, the whirl of intractable grey hair above his forehead defiant. Martin Van Buren regarded him with an inexhaustible interest—the General, with all his experience of duels and courts of law, of Indian wars and the Senate, was as innocent as a child. As innocent, at heart, and as unpredictable. He admired General Jackson, Van Buren discovered. His impetuous lack of calculation was engaging and rare in Washington. It wasn't, naturally, always wise—his attitude toward the National Bank was as premature as it was biased—and yet it had a wisdom and potency of its own. The qualities of a tremendous personal courage.

"Lewis has been back from the Senate twice since noon," Jackson commented. "The last time he said that, unless General Hayne concluded at once, Webster would have to answer him tomorrow. I understand Webster hadn't planned to be in the Senate Chamber at all. He has a case before the Supreme Court." Van Buren nodded. "Carver against John Jacob Astor. Mr. Chambers moved for an adjournment on account of it, but General Hayne insisted on continuing."

"I don't understand it," Jackson declared. "Foote's Land Resolution, in December, was clear enough, and fatally wrong; I can follow Hayne that far. But I can't make out where Webster is concerned. Anyhow, he is on the wrong side. I can see that much. I agree with everything General Hayne has said. Why has it stirred up all this commotion in Washington? Can you tell me that?" Van Buren was slow to reply; before his thoughts were in order, Major Lewis came in. "The Senate adjourned," he announced; "Webster will speak tomorrow. I never saw such a mob. You literally couldn't get in." General

Jackson repeated to Lewis the question he had asked Martin Van Buren. Major Lewis thought he could guess.

"The whole thing started over the survey of land in the West. That is how it started. When Benton took it up it was still only that; Hayne got carried away on the wings of oratory; and Webster came into it to defend the Union." That, Jackson asserted, was plain nonsense. "General Hayne is supporting the Union. Anything like the Foote Resolution that limits Western expansion is anti-national. I'm against it. The West is the United States." Lewis laughed. "You hardly need to tell us your feeling about that. I said Webster was defending the Union when perhaps I meant that he was repairing his past. You mustn't forget Daniel was one of the delegates to the Rockingham Convention; he prepared the Memorial in favor of Nullification. Before that he was a New Hampshire Federalist and very bitter about your war."

"I remember that," Jackson assured him. "I am in favor of General Hayne. I'm certain he is right — the East wants to make the westward movement difficult so they can keep men and women at work in their factories. It was Webster who puzzled me. Perhaps you are right again about him. Martin, you may be called the Red Fox in Washington, but I won't have any of that up here. What do you think?" Martin Van Buren admitted that up to a point he agreed with Major Lewis. "He has explained Webster well enough; Benton is fairly obvious; but there is more behind Hayne's speeches than anyone has realized. More that is important for the Administration. It's not just the wings of oratory." Very well, General Jackson assented irritably, what, then, was it?

"I can't tell you definitely," Van Buren replied; "so little has appeared. I shouldn't be surprised, though, if Webster had accidentally hit on the truth. The Southern Nullifiers may be moving toward complete state independence. Such a delicate conscience about the West is surprising for a South Carolina senator. He may have had a vision of a South and West concert free from the Eastern factories and high tariff." Jackson's irritability was increased. "That is the trouble with a politician like you," he declared; "you can't see or meet a simple situation simply. You are wrong. If Hayne takes the position you describe, Webster will have forced him into it. The General is supporting our party measures. I can follow that."

"After all," Van Buren reminded him, "you asked for my opinion. You seem to forget that General Hayne is Calhoun's leader on the floor; all through the debate he has sent him notes and figures from the Chair. I can't reconcile your attitude toward General Hayne with your feeling about the Vice-President. Everyone, General, hasn't your singleness of mind. You are not afraid to say what you mean; but that isn't the habit in the Senate Chamber."

"What you mean," General Jackson tartly replied, "is that I am a stubborn old jackass." He rose from his seat, his wasted body rigid with anger and his eyes burning with a blue intensity. "I am stubborn about the United States. I was put in office by the people to be stubborn when their rights were invaded and the country threatened. In me, Mr. Van Buren, perhaps for the first time, the people are the government. I know them and what they need, and, by God, if it can be had through me, they will get it." Major Lewis said mildly: "Sit down, General;

you are having a levee tonight, and you'll be worn out before it starts." General Jackson, grumbling, resumed his seat. Martin Van Buren admired him tremendously. He had the ingratiating and unreckoning idealism of a soldier. Well, why not? Donelson made his appearance.

"I suppose you were at the Senate too," Jackson addressed him. "Everyone in Washington was there except me. I can't get used to commanding engagements from the rear." Donelson admitted that he had been present for an hour. "General Hayne was magnificent. He might have been speaking officially for the Administration. There's a great excitement about Webster's reply tomorrow. General, this affair may turn into anything." Jackson repeated that it was Van Buren's opinion it might end in Nullification. "Emily wants to consult you about the list tonight," Donelson added. "She is in the East Room, but she will come up whenever you are ready." Jackson instantly showed a returning anger. "I will go down," he asserted. He left stiffly, with Major Donelson.

"It's a damned shame to hound him with Peggy Eaton," Van Buren said to Lewis. "Washington doesn't see that he is not thinking of Mrs. Eaton but of his wife, Rachel. After her wretched treatment he simply detests any scandal about a woman." Lewis agreed. "Emily Donelson puts her husband up to it. They are both a shade on the Calhoun side. It would be hard to say which was dearer to the General — the memory of his wife or the Union."

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Martin Van Buren, dressing for the evening with his accustomed exact care, was mentally concerned with the future rather than the present. He had very little interest in the immediate debate between Hayne and Daniel Webster. Of the two, as he had intimated at the President's Mansion, General Hayne engaged him more closely. There was more, he thought, to be gathered from the South Carolina Senator. They were both like children ignorantly rocking at a great lightly poised stone that might at any minute fall with fatal effect. Orators, he told himself contemptuously. There was a decanter of Madeira and a glass at his elbow; and at intervals, with an air of abstraction, he took a drink. He preferred wine to spirits and strong punch. Who, Van Buren wondered, had told General Jackson that he was called the Red Fox? It wasn't altogether flattering. He regarded it, however, with no feeling sharper than amusement: men were so wholly different from the general opinions about them.

For example, he bore no actual resemblance to the wide conception of him in Washington. He wasn't as acute as that by half. If he had any considerable power it mostly came from the facts that he was reasonable and had no necessity for talk; he was, perhaps, fortunate in his disposition; and that was very nearly all. He could make his way among factions with the smallest possible friction. It was early, he saw; the night would be long with the President's levee and a ball at the Russian Minister's afterward; and he determined to go for a little to Mrs. Madison's. Her house was like that — informal and hospitable. Every shade of political opinion mingled there in a pleasant spirit that was a compliment to Mrs. Madison's tact.

She was, as usual, in long earrings, with a brilliant and shabby scarf about her shoulders; and although neither the earrings nor the color was suitable to her years, and the shabbiness was as evident in her dress as in the house, none of that took away from her vivid charm.

She came forward gaily to meet him, holding his hand in both of hers. "It was sweet of you to stop and see me. Because I am not going to the President's levee or Baron Krudener's ball either. My dear Martin, I can't appear again in the only dress I have and I can't manage to get another. Well, I have been to enough levees as it is." He laughed. "No one would contradict that. You made them possible in Washington. Tell me what you hear about this stir in the Senate." That, she declared, was too bad — to give the effect of wanting to see her and then ask political questions. She took a liberal pinch of snuff. "I want to talk about you," she asserted. "I'd like to find out why you don't get married again. It's ridiculous, with the house you could have in Washington. Your sons will be leaving you alone soon."

"I have been too busy," he told her lightly. "Nonsense," she replied; "you're not too busy to go to every ball that's given. I hear you waltz almost better than any other man in Washington. Martin, you don't dress like a busy man. I can't make you out. There was a girl here this afternoon who would be ideal for you. She is young and beautiful — you are over forty, Martin — with wit and breeding . . . and cotton."

"Now I know you don't mean it," he asserted. "Not with cotton. If you had said something about a factory in New England, I might have listened to you." Mrs.

Madison persisted. "Youth — she is about seventeen — and beauty. Not much color and enormous eyes like brown flowers. I can't remember that I've seen a brown flower, but that doesn't matter. Promise me this much — she is going to the Krudener ball — that you will waltz with her. Once. Promise me, Martin."

"It seems harmless enough," he admitted; "but first I ought to know who she is. You know Washington. I might have to stop being Secretary of State." She wouldn't answer until she had his promise. "I know what is good for you better than anyone else. You have never been a real partisan. You are either too wise, too patient, or too ambitious. I can't tell which. Will you dance with this girl?" He nodded, and a delighted smile irradiated her worn face. "Now," he said, "go on with the details of your plot to ruin me."

"It is Floride Laurens," she replied. He was actually startled:

"Floride! Why, that is the name of Mr. Calhoun's wife. It's the name of his wife's mother. Dolly, what can you mean?" She told him that he was quite right. "Floride is a family name of the Calhouns. This particular one is the granddaughter of Madame Calhoun's sister." No promise involving him could stand in the face of that fact; he spoke positively, almost shortly. "You were just amusing yourself," he went on. "Not at all," Mrs. Madison insisted. "You ought to be upset. Martin, you are getting too perfect. You're not human enough. Every morning I hope to hear you have gone out to Bladensburg to fight a duel. I'd much rather have you in a scandal than the way you are. It's not natural. I won't have you give up your real life for some ridiculous ambition."

He asked if it would be natural for him to dance with a Calhoun. "Of course. Why not? General Jackson can't eat you up. But I suppose it isn't the General — like the rest of his friends, you are afraid of Peggy Eaton." He answered cheerfully. "Not quite. At least I have been able to keep outside of that." Why, she cried, he was supposed to be Mrs. Eaton's greatest supporter. "As a matter of fact," Van Buren informed her, "I happen to like her very well. I like Eaton too. He is badly represented by all this." Mrs. Madison agreed that his devotion to his wife was very admirable. "I won't say that he showed bad taste — I like her too, Martin — but bad judgment. You can't, in his position, marry the daughter of a tavern-keeper, who has sat on the lap, speaking figuratively, of official Washington. You can't and that's all there is about it. Anyhow, I'm tired of the Eatons. You must come in tomorrow afternoon and tell me how you got along with Floride Laurens."

"I'll have to find some other reason for seeing you," he replied. "If I have begun to need a reason. Dolly, I won't even have a chance to meet her. She'll be staying at one of the Whig houses." With Mrs. Tayloe, she admitted. "But I have arranged that, with Cora Livingston." He studied her silently, thinking that women, women of charm, were perpetually only interested in love. They thought of it too much, he decided. There were other things . . . or at least for men. His life, for the last few years, had certainly been bare enough of love. He had been fully occupied, contented. The curious part was that he liked women, girls, extremely well. He resented spending an evening with men — the gambling of Webster

and Clay, the austerity of John Calhoun, repelled him. However, at the opposite end of the scale he was equally unengaged — excessive drinking and gayety, painted pleasures, failed to attract him. He admitted to himself that Dolly was justified in that he looked like a man who should be married.

"I can see you are thinking about my suggestion," she went on. "I have nothing more to say. It must work for itself. Go to your parties. I am sitting with Mrs. Decatur and Mrs. Alexander Hamilton. The blackbirds." He got into his greatcoat, and an icy flood of winter came in at the opened door. There was no one to hold a light outside, and he fell forward, on the frozen mud of Lafayette Square, into his carriage. He was, Martin Van Buren discovered, a shade excited about the night before him. The President's levee promised to be absorbing.

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The crowd at Baron Krudener's, Van Buren thought, was larger than the mob at the President's levee. It was conspicuously more gay. He was standing by a long buffet laden with an infinity of cold dishes in the Russian fashion — supper had not yet been laid — near the entrance to the ball-room, and he doubted if another couple could have found room for the waltz then in progress. He had no intention of attempting it. A servant had brought him champagne; a corner of the buffet both held it and protected him from the throng, and altogether, he felt, he was as advantageously placed as possible. John Tyler stopped beside him. "I suppose you were at the Senate today,"

he said. Routine, Martin Van Buren replied, had kept him away. Tyler had taken John Randolph's place in the Senate, when he had led the opposition to Jackson's appointments; he was a supporter of both Calhoun and Clay; and it was evident that he had been in communication with the bottle. "I understand," Van Buren went on, "that General Hayne has finished. Webster will reply finally tomorrow." Tyler supposed so. "I suppose Webster will explain what a good party boy he is at heart. At least he has been smoked out of the opposition. We don't want him, Mr. Van Buren; you can have him." Martin Van Buren said: "With pleasure." Andrew Stephenson was swept into their protected angle. "The Administration has just received a gift," Van Buren explained; "Tyler gave us Daniel Webster." Stephenson answered seriously: "He may turn out enormously valuable. I wish I knew where this business in the Senate was leading. I'm afraid of it." Tyler grew impatient. "I hope it leads as far as possible. We may discover whether we are free men or not." Stephenson took his arm. "In another minute," he said, "you'll be giving away Virginia."

Andrew Stephenson, Van Buren concluded, at least knew where the South hoped the Hayne-Webster conflict would lead. Yes, John Tyler had admitted it. Nullification! There was no longer a doubt of that in his mind. He wondered if the United States could be destroyed. That was what separation would mean. Van Buren began to see faint indications of a course, a possible future, for himself. If the Union were preserved. Naturally that. He told himself that it all hung on one quantity — General Jackson. He was so absorbed in thought that he didn't

see Mrs. Eaton, on the arm of François Labbé, the dancing-master, stop beside him.

"I am going to stay with Mr. Van Buren," she said to M. Labbé. "Thank you. Martin, wasn't it the devil at the levee! Did you ever realize women could be so disgusting? But wasn't Mrs. Livingston an angel? No one else in Washington is more fashionable either." It had been difficult at the President's Mansion, he admitted. "But, my dear Peggy, you never looked better. Contention agrees with you." She was, in reality, lovely: a scarlet turban brought out the natural brightness of her cheeks, white satin repeated the absolute whiteness of her skin. "It's principally hard on Mr. Eaton," she admitted, "and the President. Martin, I wish for his sake he hadn't put us in the Cabinet. We ought to have gone to Russia or France. But you know General Jackson. If we left Washington he would think it was a surrender." She laid a hand on his arm. "Can we beat them?" she asked.

He shook his head negatively. "You will have to retreat. The General must give in." If that were true, she asserted, she'd leave some marks of her passage. Especially on the Calhouns. "And her so religious. Look, there goes Mrs. Tayloe. Another of them. Miss Wirt is with her, but who is the other girl? Talking to Mr. Berrien." What was Mrs. Madison's phrase — eyes like brown flowers. "I am not certain," he replied, "but I think she is a great-niece of Madame Calhoun's. There is a Miss Laurens like that staying with the Tayloes." Mrs. Eaton declared that none of the Southern women had a drop of color. "I hate white roses, Martin. If you send me any, I want them to be red, red, red!" Tomorrow, he told her,

the reddest that could be found. He was, however, intent upon the whiter flower.

Yes, she could be called beautiful. Floride, in spite of its association, was a beautiful name. It was strange that he had recognized her so instantly, among the hundreds of people around them. Anyone of a countless number of girls might have been with Mrs. Tayloe. However, she was Floride Laurens.

Mrs. Eaton continued: "Next to the General and John Eaton I owe you more than anyone alive. Perhaps I'll be able to give a little back for all you have given me." He repeated what he had said earlier. "I like you, my dear Peggy. If I have done anything, it has been too easy for notice. You mustn't forget I am always selfish." In all her life, she told him, she had seen only one man who wasn't. Andrew Jackson. The rush from the ball-room after a dance carried Cora Livingston directly up to them. "Where have you been?" Van Buren complained. "I wanted to waltz with you." The waltzes, she reminded him, were not all exhausted:

"You are Secretary of State and you can make me dance with you whenever you like. I have lost Mr. Obregon." Mrs. Eaton said that she was going home. Martin wasn't to bother about her. She smiled at Cora Livingston and left them. "Have you seen Mrs. Madison today?" Cora asked. He replied with the greatest promptitude that he hadn't. "Then you must come with me at once," she proceeded; "perhaps they have gone already." She led him away from the refuge of the buffet and his glass and, in a drawing-room below, found Mrs. John Tayloe. Mrs. Tayloe, Van Buren thought, was uncommonly

cordial: she was bitterly disdainful of the Eaton affair, an enemy to all that General Jackson supported. "Floride," she said. Floride Laurens rose from a group on a sofa across the room. "My dear child, this is Mr. Van Buren. I should like you to know the Secretary of State."

"Then this is the first time you have been in Washington," Van Buren said to her. They had waltzed and were standing by the supper table. "I was in France, at school," she explained. When she spoke she gazed at him with entire candor. "It's too miraculous for words. Mr. Preston took me to the Senate today and I thought I'd perish of excitement. General Hayne was too miraculous. I am going tomorrow to hear Mr. Webster, but Mr. Preston thinks it won't be very interesting. He thinks General Hayne has changed the history of the United States." Van Buren replied that he hoped not. He was, privately, sorry that she had gone to the Senate Chamber with Preston, who, since he too was from South Carolina, would only deepen her prejudices by his interpretation of events. "The United States," he said, "with the assistance of Washington and Jefferson, yes, and General Jackson, has been doing fairly well."

She wasn't, she made it clear, interested in union. "South Carolina is our country, Mr. Van Buren," Floride explained gravely. "It would have to be. Look, do you think you could get me one of those little iced cakes? They are wonderful with negus. Isn't Mr. Calhoun miraculous in the chair. It's horrible that old rough man is President instead of Mr. Calhoun." But perhaps, she added, she should not have said that. "I keep forgetting you are his Secretary of State. Do you mind?" No,

Martin Van Buren admitted, he didn't. Everything she said gave him an absurd pleasure. It was at once so delightful and idiotic. He was, he recognized, becoming idiotic himself. Floride Laurens held her glass of negus up to his lips. Fragrant and sweet. "Can you ask a secretary of state to come and see you?" she inquired. "If you are me, that is." Eyes like wide-opened brown flowers. "I am not sure," he replied; "perhaps Mrs. Tayloe would have to do that. You must remember I belong to another party. That is important in Washington. It was very unusual my meeting you at all." Shoulders whiter than white roses. "I will make you change your party," she told him. "I'll explain it all so you will know what to do. I want you to love South Carolina." Might it, he asked, be personified in her?

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It had not been Martin Van Buren's intention to go, on the following day, to the Senate; he kept as far as possible from the actual conflicts of politics; but, he told himself, the attendance had grown so general that he would be conspicuous if he stayed entirely away. Never before, he was certain, had there been such a mob within the garnet hangings of the Senate Chamber. Yet, in spite of the universal interest, there was little understanding of what was actually happening. The great majority had merely come to see what was undoubtedly a good fight. It was still Van Buren's opinion that Webster had not foreseen the possible developments of his oratory. He was speaking in a resonant voice, with an occasional falling

inflection, but Van Buren had no interest in his phrases. They were still moving toward the destruction of sectionalism. Calhoun was making a parade of his inattention. The sweep of dead black hair across his remarkable forehead almost obliterated an eye. He wrote or sat with an expression of stony indifference.

An endless curiosity and concern in him possessed Van Buren: Calhoun seemed to him to be a strangely passionate and ill-fated man. Now, he told himself, if the United States survived the attacks immediately moving against it, Calhoun would never be President. His evolution, in Martin Van Buren's opinion, was in the direction of disaster. In earlier days Calhoun had been an enemy of Nullification. His interest in South Carolina had increased with later years. John Randolph, his harsh thin face hidden in the vast collar of his coat, stopped beside him. "I'd give a hat to know what's in your mind," he said in his malicious voice. "You have the look of a man silently consulting the Delphic oracle. Daniel, I see, is having his fun with the lions. Look here, Van Buren, when do I start for Russia? That's more important to me. If I am the Minister to Moscovy give me my papers." Van Buren advised him to be patient. "You'll hate it when you get there. Probably that sacred black man of yours won't let you stay." He caught Frank Blair by the arm. "You must act for me; Randolph has sent for his pistols because he's delayed getting off to Russia." John Randolph turned a twisted shoulder on Blair. "That's the man who thought he could make better bricks with straw than with clay," he declared shrilly.

Van Buren saw that there were two, more nearly three,

hundred women on the floor of the Senate; they sat in the senatorial chairs and gathered in clusters on the desks. It was impossible to make out who had Preston's seat. But probably it was Floride Laurens. He had a swift unhappy sense of being definitely outside her familiar circle; the restrictions of his earliest days returned to weigh upon him. Of all the people Floride knew, only the Livingstons and Mrs. Madison would have a word to say in his favor. Suddenly, completely social in manner and appearance, he hated society. A cold and intolerant and insolently self-sufficient circle. However, officially it was addressed to fatal years. Calhoun and Henry Clay, the opposition, were strong, but the old man in the President's Mansion was stronger. It was a question of growing nationality against old separatist interests; and the General, in spite of his antiquated mold, represented the future.

For a moment a sense of inferiority had possessed Martin Van Buren, but it left him almost immediately, and he slowly forced his way in the direction of Preston's desk. Floride Laurens was there, with Mrs. Woodbury and a Miss White from Baltimore. Floride held up her hand. "I hope," she said, "you didn't come entirely to hear Mr. Webster. I don't want you to hear him at all. Remember I am your political adviser." James Preston said: "If you can influence Mr. Van Buren you will be the favorite heroine of the South." The voice of Daniel Webster, profoundly and monotonously serious, silenced them. Floride Laurens was as lovely in daylight as at night. Van Buren admitted to himself that she disturbed his heart. He forgot politics in the importance of this discovery. It was,

of course, nonsensical. He had passed the age for love. He was well over forty.

Yet that, he was just as well aware, was precisely the age for infatuations. He had thought his understanding would keep him safe from them, but it seemed that he could at once be aware of the quality of an emotion and get great pleasure from it. However, it could hardly go beyond pleasure. At his age affection was material rather than idealizing — the first word, infatuation, was better. It wasn't probable that he would become a serious victim of infatuation. Not, at any rate, with a relative of John Calhoun's. Why, it might well be disastrous. He had no inclination to play the part of a middle-aged fool to a young girl. Even if she was beautiful . . . and owned cotton. Yet this, it appeared, had nothing to do with his happiness at being near her. Van Buren wondered what the Senate would say at his present position with the enemies of the Administration. Preston was more than friendly. Major Lewis, of course, would report it all to the General.

Floride Laurens whispered: "Are you going to the cotillion Thursday night at Mr. Wirt's?" He nodded. She said that she was glad. He had never before known anyone who gave herself up so confidingly through her eyes. Utterly without conscious sophistication, he told himself. That, Martin Van Buren was certain, he could recognize. He'd had a sufficient experience of it. No, calculation wouldn't have charmed him so wholly. Floride had no fear of life, sharp experience hadn't disturbed the serenity of her being, there was no necessity for the worldliness of a mask. This recognition brought him, with all the rest, a

not inconsiderable admiration for her. An admiration and a greater interest. She was youth at its clearest best. But it was evident, as well, that she had great feeling. Again, with that absent she would have left him cold. His need for emotion was another characteristic of his years.

Van Buren gathered from the tenseness of the atmosphere that Webster was becoming more impressive. General Jackson would have to shift his opinion about him; it was clear that Hayne's party had left forever their last slight allegiance to the Administration. Now he saw that no one there but Calhoun was actually important — Webster and Hayne were hardly more than mouthpieces. The struggle was infinitely narrow; it lay between Calhoun and the President. That, at last, was the truth. The growing severance of the General and Mr. Calhoun was taking visible form. It was likely to increase, Van Buren knew. He had an entire confidence in General Jackson; all his observation and belief supported Jackson's convictions. This was necessary for him, because if the General fell he would fall with him. The opposition, in calling him the Red Fox, accurately expressed their opinion. They attributed to him every accident to their cause. They at least flattered his ability.

Yes, no matter what had animated him at the first, Webster was now upholding Jackson's conception of union. He was speaking very effectively. Perhaps there was still an objectionable trace of oratory. Oratorical phrases. General Jackson continually referred to his responsibility to the common people, but that was merely a euphemism for the country as a whole. He deserted these more conspicuous figures for himself: how could

the quarrel between General Jackson and Calhoun help him? What, within decent bounds, might be made of it? Very little, he concluded, that he had actual command of. He was looked upon as the guiding mind of his party, but, the truth was, he was scarcely more than a commentator on it. Everything depended on the candidates in the next presidential election. He had a sense of being swept into a current that made no account of individual ambitions. It was a time when individual men were of little moment. This turned him squarely toward Floride Laurens. Loosely surrounded by her fur wrap, she was like a gardenia in the heart of winter. Compared to her, Peggy Eaton, and the girl with Mrs. Woodward, from Baltimore, were very fully blown red roses indeed. Mr. Webster had finished.

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SEATED at a dinner at Major Eaton's, Martin Van Buren had an absorbing mental vision of himself from the viewpoint of the Calhouns. It wouldn't be in them not to be arrested by the attention he had already shown Floride Laurens. For a moment he wondered if her charm had been deliberately displayed for him; but he gave that idea up at once. The South didn't pay for political compromises with their women. At the same time he was forced to admit that Calhoun would not be wholly indifferent to his capture: even if his convictions remained unchanged he couldn't hope to develop them married in South Carolina. He was startled by the fact that he had considered Floride in the light of marriage. It showed

him how far he was drifting. Miss Henry, who sat on his left, might almost have been following his thoughts. "I admired your taste in the Senate, Mr. Van Buren," she said. "Isn't Miss Laurens lovely. She has a very good head, too. Perhaps we hear more about politics in the South than Northern girls do."

Mrs. Eaton glanced sharply at him. "Was that the girl with Mrs. Tayloe at the Wirts'?" she asked. Van Buren admitted that it was. "I hate playing at politics!" she declared. "Although I understand it is very fashionable now. Martin, I hope you are not being indiscreet." She spoke lightly, but he was conscious of a warning in her voice. Mrs. Livingston came to his support. "I have never known anyone further from indiscretion." Van Buren added: "Only this week Dolly Madison complained about the orderliness of my conduct. She said it wasn't human." In him, Mrs. Eaton asserted, anything else would be out of place. "I can't imagine what you'd have to say to a Calhoun," she persisted. Eaton stopped her with a generalization. "That situation with the South isn't improving." Peggy Eaton exclaimed: "Thank God, it isn't me this time! Most of it happened in President Monroe's Cabinet."

"There can't be a doubt left," Duff Green proceeded; "the Forsythe letter has been turned over to the President. Major Lewis read a note from John Calhoun about the impropriety of Cabinet disclosures. He begged Hamilton to see his name wasn't made use of." Van Buren said nothing — like Peggy Eaton he had had no part in the discovery of Calhoun's opposition to General Jackson's course in the Seminole War. At the same time, he knew,

he would be accused of digging it up. In his character of a fox. What would make that specially difficult to deny was the fact that he might very well profit from it. General Jackson would never forgive Calhoun. A man of implacable personal passions. What, Van Buren wondered, would the actual political situation turn out to be? The dinner was at an end and Mrs. Eaton said that she wanted to talk to him. She drew him into the smaller salon back of the dining-room, while the others, the men and the women, moved across the hall.

"Martin," she said at once, "I happen to know that General Jackson will stand for a second term." He was amazed. "But," he objected, "what about the understanding when Calhoun accepted the Vice-Presidency? Didn't the General agree not to run again?" Impatiently, she knew nothing about that. "If Andrew Jackson isn't the next President of the United States there won't be any United States at all," she asserted. "No one else can hold it together. No one else loves it like he does. But I want to speak about you and not General Jackson. Martin, you must be Vice-President."

He studied her thoughtfully . . . a beautiful woman. She was wearing a silver-colored dress, very low on her celebrated shoulders, a turban of silver brocade. She had brought her goblet of champagne from the table. "I needn't tell you what that might lead to," she added. The Presidency, of course; he could see that. With the first granted, the second was entirely possible. Martin Van Buren, President of the United States! He was at once without illusions about what that meant and deeply stirred by it. "It's all so very much in the future," he finally re-

plied. "So problematic. We might as well be frank — I doubt if the people would take to me after General Jackson. The difference between us is not exactly in my favor. It isn't absolutely certain he could be nominated again. He is set on killing the Bank, and that will make strong enemies in the North as well as the South."

"Martin," she demanded flatly, "can Andrew Jackson be the next President?"

"Yes," he said, "he can. With the West back of him."

"Then you will be Vice-President." She smiled at him warmly. "You have been very good to me, Martin." He was, it appeared, being offered the Vice-Presidency because he had been good to the daughter of Bill O'Neill, a Washington tavern-keeper. That, then, was more potent than all the aristocratic power and oratory of the South; it was stronger than the financial weight of Nicholas Biddle. Peggy O'Neill! But then, fortunately, it happened that he liked her. There was a long pause before she spoke again. "I was thinking about General Jackson," she admitted. "No one knows how heavenly he is. I was afraid, once, that his loyalty to me and Major Eaton would hurt him, but I was wrong — nothing can hurt him. I see all the people around him with little schemes, you and I have little schemes, but he is in another world. His faults are better than our best qualities, Martin. I suppose I am not reasonable about him; but I am a woman and I don't have to be. You can't arrive at everything by reason. Fire isn't reasonable and courage isn't. Love is the most unreasonable thing there is."

Martin Van Buren returned, almost with a shock, to

the thought of Floride Laurens. Peggy Eaton's words — love is the most unreasonable thing there is — echoed in his mind. She had intimated that he wasn't capable of it. He remembered suddenly that Andrew Jackson always wore a miniature of his dead Rachel suspended by a black ribbon about his neck. Mrs. Madison, even more clearly, had said that he lacked — what? Fire and courage. He began to be annoyed by the attacks on him. That, at bottom, was what they were. He tried to dissolve his resentment by the realization that at heart women liked folly, but he wasn't entirely successful. The truth was the whole world liked folly. Fire and courage. Well, he was too old for change. His life had been too practical for ornamental emotions. He had risen amazingly — he, Martin Van Buren, had been thinking of himself as President — and entirely by reason. Measured actions. Self-control. And yet initially he had been impetuous. But he had schooled himself out of it. Almost.

His interest in Floride Laurens was impetuous, uncalculated, enough. He was conscious of the fragrance of roses; his heart beat hard; and then he discovered there was a great bowl of them on a table behind him. However, his feeling of quickened life remained. How absurd Floride was with her politics. Advising — no, instructing him. He must love South Carolina and not the Union. In other words he must love her. Could he, Van Buren wondered. He remembered detail by detail how desirable she was — a girl in the seductive envelope of maturity. In addition her select birth fascinated him. He had always hated Federalism, but he didn't, he found, hate the society, the women, it bred. That feeling, he recognized, was part

of his own far different and unimpressive birth. It wasn't admirable. Peggy Eaton rose. "There will be another scandal," she said. "Or there would be with anyone else," she added. "You are not putting yourself out to be pleasant," he complained. "I should much rather be talked about with you than be President." Her only reply was to beg him not to tell her such thin lies. "You are Martin Van Buren and Martin Van Buren you will stay. A careful Dutchman from New York. There, I've kissed you for it!"

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William Wirt's large brick house on G Street had its façade brightly illuminated by a row of torches; the line of carriages stopping at the door appeared to be endless. The cotillion was a repetition of the polite Washington parties Van Buren knew so well, but with a slight variation — for an unofficial occasion — in the presence of the Marine Band. A detachment from it was playing on flutes and clarinets for the dancing. That, probably, had been arranged through Wirt's friendship with John Branch. Van Buren, inappropriately, was irritable. So many people, with so much freedom, had told him exactly what he was. A careful Dutchman. General Jackson amused himself, now, by continually referring to him as the Red Fox. "Soon," the General had said, "you will be holed in by the Southern hounds." He went in search of Floride at once, and when he found her she made it clear that she had been waiting for him. "It's worse than the crowd at the Russian Minister's," she told him. "Cora and the Woodwards want to ask Mrs. Tayloe if it would be proper

for us to go back there. We are having our dresses simply torn to ribbons. My slippers are sights already. Don't you think it would be splendid at the Tayloes'?" He said: "You forget I am in the opposite party. John Tayloe might think it was strange for me to be in his house. My dear child, it is ridiculous, but the Government is involved in things like that." He was ridiculous, she replied, completely intimate. "Must I explain again about your party?" Martin Van Buren admitted: "You are my party. Very well. But Tayloe doesn't know that. What do you think — shall we tell him at once?"

Floride hesitated, gazing away from him; something disturbingly like fear weighed upon him; to his immediate relief Mrs. Tayloe came up to them. "Mr. Van Buren," she proceeded, "Cora and Floride and the Woodwards complain that they can't even breathe here, they want to go back home, and I wonder if you would look after them. Mr. Tayloe is engaged and I can't possibly leave." He thanked her formally. "I should love to." He took Floride in his carriage. Martin Van Buren realized that he had, practically, already proposed marriage to her. That had the effect of driving him into a state of silence. If he spoke, he thought, he could only go on. In reality it would be stupid to speak . . . he ought to kiss her. He had a feeling that she wouldn't object. He didn't.

She got lightly out of the carriage and ran into John Tayloe's house. The others, with Mr. Vaughn, Baron Stackelburg, in his perpetual spurs, and young Quincy, were before them. "We'll have to stay in the front room," Floride explained. "Mr. Tayloe is playing cards in the back. With Mr. Clay and General Hayne and, I think,

Mr. Van Ness. Mr. Tazewell, from Virginia, is there too. They are dreadfully serious."

Martin Van Buren sat with her on a small sofa away from the others, about an open fire of coals. A part of her skirt lay like a vapor over his knee. He was conscious of the actual fragrant warmth of her body. A recklessness, like the effect of wine, poured through him. Life wasn't somber; politics and public preferment were not its end. Dolly Madison was right. He had already held a great many posts: Surrogate and State Senator, Attorney-General of New York, United States Senator, Governor of New York, and Secretary of State; that was enough honor for any one man; the rest of his life would be better spent in private circumstances of ease and charm. A servant came up to him:

"Mr. Tayloe says to excuse him, but will you step back into the room with the gentlemen. It will only be for a minute." Tayloe met him at the door. "I am sorry if I interrupted you, Mr. Van Buren. It was so fortunate you were here, I couldn't help asking for you." General Hayne, commanding an impressive heap of gold, sat across from him at a table scattered with cards. Clay was on the left — there was no money before him — and he was somber, brief in manner; Van Ness smiled expansively; Tazewell politely rose. He was, however, unsteady: a negro stood at a great punch-bowl against the wall. "Mr. Van Buren, a chair and a glass of Daniel Webster punch. Daniel designed it before he became the spokesman for heaven on earth." Hayne asked: "What is in it, aside from the brimstone?" John Tayloe turned to the negro. "Mr. Tayloe, there is Medford rum and brandy

and champagne and arrack and a spill of Menschino and green tea and lemon and sugar." His owner proceeded:

"You speak, Tazewell, for Virginia."

The Virginia senator leaned forward, his elbows on the table. "We were talking about the anniversary of Mr. Jefferson's birth — it will be along soon — and it occurred to us it ought to be marked in some notable way. A dinner, we thought. Now, Mr. Van Buren, it would be nothing without General Jackson; we couldn't, to be quite honest, go forward if we lacked the President. We all, I think, know the regard General Jackson has for Jefferson. We know the resemblance between them — they were both the choice of the American people and, by temperament and by fact, servants of the West. I can't conceive that Jackson would not support our plan, but this is our position — we can't put ourselves, and General Jackson, to the embarrassment of a public refusal. In the unlikely event that he would refuse. We must, first, have his assurance . . . and that assurance we hope you will discover. We couldn't possibly have hit on a better means."

Van Buren's gaze passed from Tazewell around the table: Van Ness met his eyes solidly; Hayne was idly fingering the gold before him; Tayloe was friendly; but Henry Clay stared back at him with hardly any effort to conceal his animosity. On the surface, Martin Van Buren thought, it was an entirely reasonable and harmless proposal. However, except for him, General Jackson hadn't a friend or well-wisher in the room. Tayloe was narrowly aristocratic, a Whig supporter of special privilege and owner of a great racing-stable; General Hayne and Tazewell were conspicuous in the party of Nullification; Van

Ness was indifferent to national concerns; and Henry Clay had hated Jackson since the days of the Adamses' presidential campaign. The dinner to Jefferson was the proposal of the strongest possible anti-Administration interests. He had a feeling that it hid a current of tremendous potential importance.

"I can't, naturally, answer for General Jackson," he said finally. "So many things, having nothing to do with the dinner, might affect him. His health, it is proper for me to say, hasn't been all we might desire." Clay replied abruptly: "We should be obliged if you'd give General Jackson the message just as you have heard it." Van Buren replied blandly: "Of course. As I said, it seems admirable." What lay back of it? The proposal would need to be very carefully discussed with Major Lewis and Blair and Duff Green. He must see them before he spoke to the General. He rose. "I won't interrupt your play." When he returned to the drawing-room Floride was with the others at the open fire; she smiled at him faintly, but made no effort to return to the farther sofa. She was placid, as though a great deal had been safely decided. There was a rattle of young talk about occasions and people he knew little of; the close selfish interests of the purely social world; and a profound depression settled over him. His feeling of warmth and delight in life had vanished. It began to appear that he ought to see the General's advisers at once, that night. Green would be at the office of the Telegraph, and Frank Blair lived at Gadsby's. They could send to the President's Mansion for Lewis. Josiah Quincy, he saw, was increasingly attentive to Floride, and he rose. She accompanied him to the door of the drawing-room.

"Don't desert me for Massachusetts," he begged; "you would never be happy with the high-tariff Federalists."

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Duff Green said at once: "There is more in this than they let out, but I'll be damned if I can see what." Blair added: "Unless something dangerous does appear the General will have to go. We shall all have to go." Major Lewis and Van Buren agreed. "I don't see how it can hurt him," Lewis went on. Blair grew more thoughtful. "They will try to commit him to the South, to sectionalism," he decided. "Count on his admiration for the Kentucky Resolutions and his Tennessee birth. We can keep the General away from that. We'll have to if he is going to succeed himself. His Cabinet is disorganized now and a new one won't be much better. It's a good thing we are so completely together." Martin Van Buren was thinking of Floride Laurens; he wondered what they would say if they knew where his thoughts were. He was undoubtedly, in his heart at any rate, a traitor to their interests . . . perhaps to his own. Perhaps. He could never be Vice-President married to Floride. His questions about the future took a concrete shape. Now he could measure them. As Vice-President with the General he could never be part of Floride's life.

To hell with it then! To hell with what? he asked himself stupidly. With all his dreams and secret ambitions, the accumulation of his lifelong effort. Instead, he would live in New York, practicing law, and on a South Carolina cotton plantation. With cotton planters.

A connection of John Calhoun's. He'd be forever removed from his party, isolated from his friends. He was, now, too old, too deeply involved, to make new ones. He could see the honest disappointment of Major Lewis, Blair's quiet biting scorn, Duff Green's printed anger. But Floride would make up for all that. She was enough. "Martin," Green concluded, "you will have to advise General Jackson to go to this dinner. They will try to catch him if he does, but they certainly will if he won't." He dropped a hand on Van Buren's shoulder. "We are lucky in you, Martin," he said; "you are the only one of us who can really satisfy the public view. When the General retires we shall still be here." Van Buren nodded.

There was nothing he could say. If he had been actually engaged to Floride Laurens he might have spoken then; left them forever; he wasn't, he trusted, afraid of life. But he wasn't. He had been taking, where Floride was concerned, a great deal for granted. Neither, speaking for himself, was he yet wholly committed to her. Suddenly he recognized that he had arrived at the moment of absolute choice. His forehead was wet with apprehension, and he took a deep drink of rum from a glass before him. He wanted Floride desperately; he saw in a flash all the elegant details of a life with her; the intimate details burned in his mind. Then he turned from hot to cold, his being was numb — except for the quick pain that wrenched his heart. Van Buren rose hastily. The faces of Green and Lewis and Frank Blair were hateful to him. "I will see General Jackson tomorrow," he said. "He will agree with what you have decided."

In his bedroom his mouth was hard and his gaze blank.

It was probable, then, that he would be Vice-President o the United States. It was better than a bare chance h would be President. If the United States, in defiance o Calhoun, continued to exist. At any rate he was dedicate to its continuance. Hell, he was dedicated to Martin Va Buren, to his success and worldly place. There was no fir of folly in him. A cautious Dutchman. He grew calmer — it was evident that Mrs. Madison and Peggy were right For a moment Floride's skirt had lain like a fragrant mis about him. Young and beautiful and seductive. She would he realized, go back to South Carolina very quickly now He would never see her again. All that had lingered o his spirit of youth would depart with her. The Martin Van Buren who remained was the Red Fox, a member o General Jackson's famous kitchen Cabinet, a politician.

This came strongly back to his mind at the twentiet toast of the dinner given in honor of Thomas Jefferson He was seated at a table with an excellent view of both the President and Calhoun. John Calhoun had been silen and wary in manner. He practically never drank an merely wet his lips at every formal proposal. Soon, Va Buren knew, the printed toasts would be at an end Woodbury and Hayne had spoken; and, following Mr Bigg of Kentucky, Barbour was explaining the sovereign state Resolutions of Virginia; the informal toasts mus follow, the moment for which the Nullifiers were waitin — the President would be obliged to speak. Jackson looke more worn than usual; his thin shoulders were bent wit weariness; his mouth might have been drawn in pain. H rose and there was a deep silence. Calhoun was bent for ward. Jackson spoke suddenly and harshly.

"Our Federal Union; it must be preserved."

Calhoun's hand shook so that the wine in his glass was spilled. It was wet on his sleeve. Jackson had withdrawn into the corner of the room with Benton, and, the last strained responses scarcely over, there was a general rush toward the doors. Almost at once the banquet room of the Indian Queen was very nearly empty. Donelson came up to Martin Van Buren. "The General has gone and wanted me to say he would like to see you at the Mansion." Van Buren nodded. He knocked at the door of General Jackson's bare office and there was a muffled response. Jackson was seated with the miniature of his dead wife before him on the table. He made no effort to hide it.

"Mr. Van Buren," he said, "our position is at last clear. It is before the people. It can be known any time now that I have decided to stand for a second term. In my opinion the success of Mr. Calhoun would be fatal. I couldn't allow any chance of that. I want it to be understood, at the same time, you are my choice for Vice-President."

He stood up with the painted image of Rachel Jackson in his hand. "I have been a very victorious man," he said on a great breath of feeling. Van Buren bowed. He was grateful to the President for his confidence. He felt curiously small. Faintly humiliated. The old General was as strong and bitter and bright as a flame. "I mean this, Mr. Van Buren," he continued, "I am victorious because of Mrs. Jackson. Without her everything would have been meaningless. I am an ignorant and an ill-controlled man, I have always been a victim of temper, but there has never been a time when I was afraid of my worst faults. I had

the love of Mrs. Jackson to reassure me. You may think this is unbecoming in a man of my years; if you do — I say this in all kindness — you are the ignorant one of us. The rest, like the battle of New Orleans, finds you lonely and leaves you alone." The hand about the miniature was tense, the black ribbon hung still.

Outside, the April night was tender with a beginning scent of lilacs, the stars were dim in a sky of mist. Van Buren had ridden to the President's Mansion, and, crossing Lafayette Square, he drew his impatient horse into a walk. He was in no hurry to reach his empty house: Abraham, his eldest son, was with the army on the Indian frontier, John was in New York. A warm April night; the air was potent with a sense of green birth, of young flowers. The spring, however, wasn't for him; April had gone from him; but it hadn't, apparently, deserted General Jackson, an old and infirm man. Infirm and old he talked exaltedly about love. Well, Martin Van Buren told himself, he had known love; his wife, too, was dead. She had left him. But Rachel had stayed with Jackson. She was with him tonight; Rachel was his great triumph. That was the measure, the immeasurable distance, between Andrew Jackson and himself. That was his own success and his inferiority.

IX.

NINE

At Broad Street and East Bay the ranks of the Carolina Rifle Club broke and its members gathered about the entrance of the Trenholm banking building. Their companions in parade, the older Schutzenfest, continued in marching order toward the Battery. The officers of the Carolina Rifle Club carried canes and bouquets of violets; the bouquets became a difficulty, and they were temporarily left in a fragrant heap by the door. All the men wore black felt hats turned up with green rosettes, grey coats of Kentucky jeans, hunting-shirts with green braid, and black trousers; but John Fearnes, who was rifle master, had a horn in green worsted on his arm. The occasion had been under the command of Walker Irvine, the first Vice-President; and, addressing Fearnes, he directed him to attend a special meeting in the club rooms above. John Fearnes had kept his violets, and, going slowly up the long dark stairway, he had a feeling that he was partly sustained by their sweetness. He loved flowers. And peace, he reminded himself. The truth was that he loved everything flowers suggested — quiet gardens and hours; the pastoral poetry of Thomson's Seasons; drawing-rooms with yellow roses; and low charming voices:

But the charming voices, he further realized, were all in the background: perhaps the one really fortunate

circumstance in the tragic present was the fact that he owned no attachment to a woman. None was dependent on him. However, he was not concerned by that. Women had never very strongly attracted him. Through all the forty years of life he could remember he had been equally retiring. Indifferent. His vitality, and for that reason his desires, had never been intense. If — before the war, of course — he had been poor he would have been a teacher of literature or philosophy; as it was he had become, he had always been, a dreamer. A man who hated noise and contention; who was actually frightened by brutality; who was frightened by mere ugliness.

Physically he was slight, with a pale thin face, slightly drawn as though by the memory of pain, and fragile hands. Hands for the brittle pages of old books. His hesitating manner and mobile expression remained those of a boy; he had a sensitive boy's questioning candor; and his voice was as gentle as his air. He contrived, when it was possible, even in the Carolina Rifle Club, to stay unnoticed. It was strange, Fearnes thought, that he had been elected rifle master. There were twenty men in the club better fitted for that responsibility. In fact, he had protested against accepting it, but no one had listened to him. He didn't, for one thing, like rifles. They, too, filled him with a vague dread; and yet he was in charge of them. A serious position. It was enveloped, like all life now, with an unpleasant, a mocking, aspect of humor.

Walker Irvine had reached the club rooms before him; Rondelet was there and Dobbs Fenwicke; when the meeting was called to order ten men were present. Irvine spoke. "I was sorry to ask you to parade today, it's

troublesome and dangerous, and looked particularly useless now. I did it for the reason we always show ourselves publicly. For effect. But that, I must admit, was small enough in the election. With Moses successful. Franklin J. Moses Governor of South Carolina! We can hardly add anything to that. But he isn't the business of this meeting. Gentlemen, we are completely in the hands of the North. We thought it was bad under Scott; it will be worse with Moses. God knows what will happen to the State debt. Last year it was over twenty-two million dollars. Gleaves, one of the worst niggers in South Carolina, is Lieutenant-Governor. Beverley Nash, the Republican leader in the State Senate, blacked boots at the Pavilion Hotel. He was respectable compared with the Senator from Georgetown. The President of the Senate is a negro. The Speaker of the House is a negro. So is the State Treasurer. Wright, a nigger, is a justice of the Supreme Court. The Attorney-General, Elliott, is black, and Grant has put a black postmaster in Charleston. Our degradation is almost complete."

Why, Fearnes wondered, irritably, did Walker Irvine repeat what they all knew? It was clear that the State, that Charleston, would be accumulatively worse under Moses than it had been when Scott was Governor. Everything in South Carolina was worse. "It's no good going on with that," Irvine admitted. "We are only too familiar with it. Charleston has been under nigger rule for six years. But now our position is more serious." He paused. "Mingo Harth is back. Openly." Ashton Charville asked sharply: "Do you mean the Postle?" Yes, Irvine replied, he did. Charville thought he had been executed. "After

the conspiracy with the Haiti slaves. I remember he was proved guilty." Irvine replied shortly: "He escaped. That was the last time he was in Charleston until yesterday. He says the Union Republicans are going to elect him mayor." There was a general stir of incredulity. "Why," Holt Gaddens declared, "the Postle would cut a Yankee throat just as soon as mine or yours. Sooner, because there would be money in a Yankee's pocket. The negroes know him. They ought to make it impossible." Irvine continued:

"He was with Banks Knell and later with Simril. The two most political negroes in the state. There was a meeting of some sort. I was assured Harth was truthful. For the moment. If he is, we have had no trouble at all yet. None. I know him better than anyone else does here. The blacks won't, as Holt suggests, finish him among themselves because they are afraid of him. He isn't an ordinary nigger. His name shows that: the Postle. He got most of his influence selling charms. The last time he was beaten for it he insisted they were love charms. But there was a healthy doubt. I ought to say an unhealthy doubt. Juju, I was told. But I paid no attention to that. Thank God, I haven't got a black mind. We are here to discuss reality and not superstitions. The reality is bad enough."

"It seems to me our duty is clear," Charville spoke again. "The Carolina Rifle Club was not organized for parades." Irvine answered decidedly: "Harth is too cunning. He won't expose himself. If he's nominated he will have an escort. Soldiers at the door. No, it would have to be stopped at Columbia. If possible. I needn't point out the consequences if he was elected. He hates us all gener-

ally and some of us very much in particular. By name, I might say. That isn't specially important. I mean what he could do to us individually. We face that every day. It's other things. I couldn't even suggest them. I don't know what they'd be. He has imagination. But we are getting nowhere. Do any of you remember Beverley Nash?"

John Fearnes unhappily admitted that he had encountered Nash at the Pavilion and on the sloop Annie. Walker Irvine was obviously relieved. "Then, Colonel Fearnes, it is my suggestion you go to the capitol and see Nash privately. Point out to him that the present condition can't last forever. His carpet-bagger friends have left already. Tell him he will soon need the support of his own state. Promise it to him, in reason, if the Postle isn't nominated." Fearnes agreed. "Very well, if that is your decision. I will do what I can, Walker, but I have no confidence in my success. You won't think I am trying to avoid a disagreeable duty." Irvine smiled. "Hardly," he said; "not after your record in the war. Under fire. John, I am going to be even more unfeeling and turn Mingo Harth over to you personally. You can exercise your ingenuity on him. The resources of the club are back of you, of course, but there is no need to spread that on the minutes. We can't, unhappily, wear our bays publicly. Draw, when you have to, on the special fund, and remember we are only a sentimental rifle club . . . with bouquets."

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John Fearnes walked slowly past Elliott and Tradd Streets to the East Battery; the paving and tracks were

broken and the openings choked with weeds; the wharves, Boyce's, the Adgers', and Vanderhorst Wharf, were empty and dilapidated; the Cotton Press opposite and a house on Stoll's Alley had been hit by shells. Beyond, the water of Charleston Harbor was an idyllic blue. The city itself, Fearnes thought, was stagnant; there was no movement in the air; it seemed to lie thick and dead on the roofs. He had been away from Charleston through the last three years of the war, with the Nineteenth South Carolina infantry; but he could imagine that it had been better during the siege, heroic and unfallen, than it was now. The tonic smell of gunpowder in place of the smell of negroes. It was curious — in the past he had liked negroes; he had liked to think that he knew them . . . a little. No one who was white could know more than a little about negroes. Vague perceptions. Guesses. Fantastic deductions:

He remembered Walker Irvine's disdain for juju. His own feeling was different; he wasn't as certain about it as Walker. In the past — the incredibly happy past — the truth was, he had been interested in such black magic. Only he had called it primitive religion. Obviously its right description. But opportunities for finding out about it practically didn't exist. Aside from a price he had been congenitally unwilling to face. The fact that it even occurred to him had frozen him with fear. Yet, together with the horror, it held an undeniable fascination. And so — with enormous relief — he had given the whole affair up. Except for things he accidentally saw and heard. He had, at times, been able to put scattered hints and words together. But, he realized, to no reputable result. He had denied himself the further study of primitive powers.

But he had, Fearnes insisted, liked negroes. Until now. And what had happened was not their fault. They were bad at present because they were neither slaves nor free. That, he saw, might with equal justice be said of himself. However! Slavery was gone, the old serene days were gone. A new and shameful time, with its corruption, was everywhere evident about him. Fearnes reached the South Battery walk and turned to the right. Ahead the White Point Garden, its crape myrtles set against the blue tide, was seductive with a false appearance of peace. The walks were cool in shade, the iron benches commanded tranquil reaches of foliage and water. But it was all, the truth was, treacherous; the retreat of vileness and imminent danger. The open Battery walk, in reality, was not safe. He never unnecessarily went out alone at night.

Yes, the air — now that it was no longer purified by fire — was stagnant; it was debased like mixed blood. There were, occasionally, muskets discharged into it, but they were muffled and surreptitious. The dull sounds of murder. It would be no better, he realized, in Columbia. Sherman, as usual, had been effective there. Utter destruction. Useless. The Union General had engaged himself to preserve the city, but burned it at the signal of three rockets. Soldiers hacking at the fire-hose. Breaking the water-tanks. Still, that, John Fearnes remembered, was war. Frightful. He didn't, now, see how he had lived through it — three years without a conscious moment free from horror. Actual and mental. Not, though, that one was less real than the other. Less destructive. Well, he had survived; only to come upon something more devastating. This business of Mingo Harth. The Postle.

Walker Irvine hadn't exaggerated Harth's possibilities as mayor of Charleston. Harth, of course, was insane with the peculiar insanity of the jungle. Murder would be a commonplace, but it wouldn't be commonplace murder.

John Fearnes stopped, beyond King Street, at a dignified house of yellow brick separated from the walk by a high iron grille. Curved stone steps rose from the shallow inclosed garden to the front door; it had an iron handrail, and it was massed with blooming Cherokee roses. The roses were the only reassuring things he had seen in the whole city. Within, the high hall was empty and cold; a single chair stood by a tall dusty mirror and there were fragments of paper on the floor. John Fearnes went up to the second floor, to an impressive drawing-room with its length open in long windows on the Battery. There was a China carpet, with a design in rose and indigo-blue and dull orange on a white ground; the walls were painted terra-cotta red, and there were two great cut-glass chandeliers. At the farther end an old man looked up from a table deep in papers. It was Allds Fearnes, John Fearnes's father. He was engaged in making a register of St. Philip's Parish. The younger asked:

"How are you getting along?"

"I am having the devil of a time with the Greens and the Greenes," he replied. "There is no difference observed in the spelling at all. It was like that, perhaps you will remember, with the Faulkners. Looking ahead, I can see it will be the same with the Lees. I may have to index them all as Leas. Then on September second, Seventeen thirty-two, Childermus, the son of Abraham Croft and Ann Maria, was born; and in Seventeen thirty-two Ann the

daughter of Childermus Croft and Catherine his wife was born; but I can't make out that month. It is blurred. I must know when it was." His voice and brow were worried, and John Fearnes put a hand on his shoulder. "The light is fading," he explained. "Put the records away until tomorrow and then it will all be clear."

"I thought of ordering candles," his father replied. "But where the servants are I can't make out. You might pull on the bell-cord until your arm dropped off."

There was no one to hear a bell, a fact Allds Fearnes constantly forgot. "The servants are all gone," the younger man patiently explained. "We have had none since the war began." His father said: "That's so, the rascals. It won't stay in my mind. I hope the woman still comes in to cook. A gentleman may cook on a military campaign, but not in his own house. Where were you all afternoon?" John Fearnes told him that the Carolina Rifles had been parading with the Schutzenfest. "You did say that," he admitted. "John, I'm tired; and I'm not a third through the register. If I don't live to finish it you must take it up." They were seated on a balcony at the back of the house. Below, a garden had grown into confusion. There was the heavy scent of a banana shrub. A musical cry came from Legaré Street: "Sweet rose tomaytoes!" There was another, far off: "She craib, she craib, she craib." The elder Fearnes repeated hardly above his breath:

"Load my gun
Wid sweet sugar-plum
An' shoot dem nung gal."

"I shall have to go to Columbia tomorrow," John Fearnes said suddenly. "I must be away two or perhaps

three days. I hope you will be all right. I will give you some money, only you must be careful with it. Let Saby in by the side door. I don't like to leave you, but it can't be helped." Why, his father demanded querulously. "I can take care of myself. I always keep a pair of loaded pistols by me. It's safe to kill almost anyone now." His hands, on the arms of his chair, were remarkably like his son's; but the skin was like the rind of a lemon; the veins were indigo. A mocking-bird sang with a sustained liquid sweetness. "You never hear a chuck-will's-widow any more," Allds Fearnes complained. "They used to come with the dusk."

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The rebuilding of Columbia, Fearnes saw, was confined to the main street: the heaps of fire-blackened bricks and charred rafters were being hauled away and new stores were in course of contruction. Columbia, like Charleston, was sunk in a careless and exhausted lethargy. Walking toward the State House, he passed imposing and dilapidated mansions set back in melancholy neglected gardens. Urns and statues were overthrown and broken, paths were unraked and lost, the porticoes were empty. Soon, however, he was caught in an increasing activity of negroes. A rough fence enclosed the littered and barren grounds of the State House. Near by a white officer, from the Army of the North, was drilling a black company; there were groups of negroes in serious consultation; others — legislators — slept sprawled on the grass; a solitary statesman in an old black frock-coat, with

a rusty high silk hat and a torn woolen scarf about his throat, paced muttering loudly to himself. There were shouts of laughter, high calls, even a wail of song.

Where, John Fearnes asked a decent-appearing negro, could he find Beverley Nash? It was hard to say about Mr. Nash, he was informed. Mr. Nash was busy with near everything and everybody. He might be in the Senate Chamber, and then he might be in one of the committee rooms. Sometimes he stopped next to the office of the Clerk of the Senate. That retreat, Fearnes discovered, was completely furnished with senators and representatives, wines and liquors, cold dishes and cigars. There was no formality in the frankest satisfaction of personal appetites — there were negroes with champagne and corncob pipes, negroes with whisky and Havana cigars, negroes happy with beer and sliced chicken, negroes with unrestricted gin and Virginia ham. They were neither sober nor drunk, but united in a spirit of amazed and noisy pleasure. They were not only continuously eating and drinking, but begging one another to drink and eat just a little more.

Where, Fearnes asked again, was Beverley Nash? Beverley had been in that very room not a minute ago. Probably now he was back in the Senate. A white friend of Senator Nash's was looking for him. "Here, boy!" A ragged negro child was captured. "You're one of the Senate pages. Take this gentleman where he can find Mr. Beverley Nash." In the Senate Chamber Nash was discovered to have gone to the House. There the floor was in an uproar. A dozen members were on their feet at once in a shouted confusion of parliamentary terms. A point of

order! A point of personal privilege. The gentleman from Laurens County. The chair please and I was talking first. The gavel fell in a sustained minor thunder of warning. The confusion slowly subsided. There were scattered laughs. The members, in every variety of dress, were seated in every possible attitude; pairs of incredible feet were elevated on the desks. There was a general eating of bananas and peanuts. Banana skins, peanut shells, were dropped over the floor.

A Representative was speaking. "Congress has passed the Force Bills. The Ku Klux trials came to the right end they came to. For one I am not in favor of delving into the past. The present is what this honorable body is engaged with. For that reason I am opposed to devoting any large sum of money on the Ku Klux and our scattered country brothers. Let us concentrate our money and our power. There is too much personal talk here. Take it to Captain Hubbard and the State Constabulary. See the Committee on Contingencies. Don't burden us with your aches and pains and troubles —" He was interrupted by a second law-maker. The honorable gentleman forgot that he was once a scattered country brother. Did he ever have the Ku Klux wang in his door? Did the honorable gentleman ever see a Ku Klux in the middle of the night with red horns a foot long?

The gavel fell. Speeches on the floor were limited to five minutes. In a corner, silent and bewildered and grim, sat a few white Democratic members of the House. They were from the mountains — a useless sacrifice in the magnified black chatter. John Fearnes identified the seven white men who supported the negro party. They, rather

than the negroes, were growing rich in the universal stealing. The entire appropriation for the State Insane Asylum had disappeared. There was a new issue of fraudulent State bonds at every session. He approached a small group of white men at the rail. "I am looking for Beverley Nash," he explained. There was no answer. John Fearnes repeated his words. An individual in a wide battered hat, his lips brown with tobacco, replied that he was damned if he cared who anyone was looking for.

"Nash is over there," another member of the group said. "You can just see his head. Now, Crews," he returned to a confidential discussion. That, then, was Joe Crews, the ex-nigger-trader. He had been in the Legislature, a commissioner of elections and trial justice, and military aide to Governor Scott. Crews had armed the negroes of Columbia with six or seven hundred stands of improved Springfield rifles and ammunition. The taller man, with the patriarchal beard, Fearnes decided, was Whittemore. The Reverend B. F. Whittemore of Boston, who had owned slaves, and, carpet-bagging, risen to power in South Carolina by marrying negroes for small fees. He had been expelled from Congress for selling cadetships to Annapolis and West Point, and, in recognition of so much, he was the State Senator from Darlington. Fearnes recognized Beverley Nash.

"Nash," he said, "I am Colonel Fearnes, of Charleston." Nash, who was a tall and handsome negro, carefully dressed, looked down on John Fearnes. He didn't, he replied, appear to remember him. He hoped, however, Fearnes had been colonel on the right side. "In the sacred cause of liberty." Fearnes ignored that. "I came to

Columbia to see you about a rumor in Charleston." Nash interrupted him. He wasn't, he said, interested in Charleston rumors. Charleston, it was known, was disloyal to the Union, and as far as he, Beverley Nash, was concerned, the city might be excised from the map. Things seemed as if it might be. That, too, John Fearnes overlooked. "I want to talk to you," he replied more decidedly; "and this doesn't seem to be the place." Nash, it appeared, couldn't talk to him now in this place or any other. He had three committees that afternoon. This was Tuesday — he might see him on Friday. Yes, it was barely possible he would be at liberty, for a very little while, on Friday. Fearnes said: "Today or tomorrow." His voice was low and cold and quiet. Beverley Nash started to speak more loudly; it was possible that in a moment more he would be shouting; but suddenly his manner changed; it dissolved before Fearnes's level stare.

The best Nash could do was that night, and then it would be very inconvenient. Governor Moses was having a ball, and, if Colonel Fearnes would come to the Governor's mansion at about eleven o'clock, he would contrive to see him. That, Fearnes realized, was final. He agreed shortly. "Very well." He left the State House as quickly as possible. His face was whiter than usual and his knees were weak. His lips were pinched. From the United States barracks, on the outskirts of the town, came the strains of a military band playing John Brown's Body. The street was full of negroes on foot and in gigs going out for the parade and sunset music. Even war had been corrupted. John Fearnes thought with envy of all men killed in action. His mind was haunted by the insane

spectacle of government in the negro House of Representatives, by the greed, the political malice, of the North. Mingo Harth was the symbol of Union, a black seal on the fate of South Carolina.

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SEATED in an alcove of the mansion lately acquired by Governor Franklin J. Moses, waiting for the social activities of Beverley Nash to reach a pause, John Fearnes's faint constant sense of horror was increased by the grotesque unreality of his surroundings. The Governor, in a florid version of evening dress, passed accompanied by his aides, negro and white, in uniforms brilliant with looped scarlet cords and gilt buttons; the Lieutenant-Governor, Gleaves, wore a violet coat and his hair pasted across a black forehead. The orchestra, in a farther room, played a triumphal march, and the dancers crowded respectfully forward to view the imposing cortège. It was followed by exclamations of satisfaction and wonder. Most of those present were negroes, negroes of every conceivable shade — there were girls so pale, so gracefully lovely, that even Fearnes was in doubt about them; and men with the dry blackness of charcoal. The girls wore bright colors, green and primitive red and sunflower yellow, their light or dark bare shoulders were grey with powder. Their necks and wrists were hung with gold and barbaric stones, and they were drenched with heavy perfume. Waves of hot scent alternated with the acrid odor of black bodies. The men were more variously garbed: there was an extravagant elegance and bright shabby

makeshift. Against a background of music a continuous bass and treble laughter rose in an eager stammering pressure of pleasure, with a constant undertone of hysteria. None of this would have caused John Fearnes the slightest uneasiness; it was familiar and merely distasteful; but as the body of a ball in the Executive Mansion of the State it was, briefly, monstrous.

The degraded white element, he decided again, was what gave the occasion its air of corruption. He was repelled by the animal vigor of the negroes; but, following with a cold curiosity the white figures in the throng, his face was bitter. He saw a woman in pink tulle, unmistakably blonde, dancing with Cardoza, the mulatto State Treasurer. A northern captain in uniform was dancing with a young girl with the rich negro whiteness of a gardenia. She wore a honey-colored dress and long earrings of topaz and pale Spanish gold. A Gulla nigger of the Fifty-seventh Massachusetts Regiment roughly shoved aside a carefully dressed and apologetic white man. Beverley Nash stopped in front of Fearnes. He referred to John Fearnes as his Nemesis, and doubted if, after all, he had time to confer with him.

"It will only need a few minutes," Fearnes proceeded. "There is a rumor in Charleston Mingo Harth is to be nominated for mayor on the Union Republican ticket. If he is elected it will be fatal for the negro cause in South Carolina. At last. There is a limit, Washington will discover, we can't go beyond. I'll remind you that none of this was Mr. Lincoln's plan, but U. S. Grant's. The Union League and Freedmen's Bureau, the North, are only interested in your vote. In separating you from the

Democratic party. Before the war no respectable negro would recognize Mingo Harth." Nash interrupted him to say that if he had known what the Colonel was after he would not have granted him an interview. Beverley Nash repeated that he had no concern with Charleston. Mingo might be bad, but he couldn't be bad enough for that white sepulcher. Besides, times had changed, what was low had become high, and Mingo Harth had gone up. He would, today, get a big vote. For several reasons. John Fearnes saw that it was useless to continue. Probably Mingo Harth would be mayor of Charleston . . . for a little. However, the damage in that short period must be incalculable.

He was sorry, Nash said, but he could wait no longer. Governor Moses wanted to consult with him, and there were others. Very different. But there was no reason for the Colonel to hurry away. He had better stay and enjoy himself. If he took a fancy to anyone in particular, say that he was Beverley Nash's guest. John Fearnes made no reply; his face was set like a death mask; and Nash, suddenly uneasy, withdrew. He must go at once, Fearnes realized, but for the moment he was incapable of movement. He was crushed into his seat by the whole weight of present tragic misfortunes. The dance continued. The music and voices grew louder. Joe Crews, his planter's hat arrogantly across his eyes, passed. Fearnes saw the bearded and reverend-appearing Mr. Whittemore. Cardoza, who was from Charleston, stopped and spoke civilly; he presented the woman with him. She was a Mrs. Dembo. She came, Cardoza proceeded, from New Orleans. John Fearnes acknowledged this adequately. He

was standing, turning finally away, when he happened to see an artificial blue mark in the palm of the woman's right hand.

She was slight, graceful, and pale; her skin was uncommonly bright, almost orange, in color; and her eyes, no more than half opened, were amber. Somnolent. She spoke in a low and indifferent voice with a trace of Spanish. Her whole bearing was indifferent, supported by the insolence of some hidden pride or power. Perhaps Mrs. Dembo would like to talk to Colonel Fearnes, Cardoza proceeded. He bowed ceremoniously and turned away. She didn't, she said, like the party or the people around them. The men had the manners of field hands, the women were frightfully dressed, and the music horrible. In New Orleans such an occasion would be very different. Did he know the Calinda? "I have never been to Louisiana," Fearnes acknowledged. There was a fine gold chain about her neck, its ends disappeared into the lace at her breast, and he speculated upon what was hidden. He had given up the intention, neglected the need, of leaving immediately.

Mrs. Dembo fell into a silent remoteness. In repose her face was haggard; her mouth was bloodless and malign. She was, in reality, curiously hideous. Her grace, her bright and surprising color, ordinarily hid that. It was impossible to guess her age. At first John Fearnes would have said thirty; now he saw that she might be fifty. She wasn't, of course. He asked her, formally, if she cared to dance.

He found that she danced better than well, with a complicated perverse rhythm within the time of the music. She was extraordinarily light and cold in his arms. A wave of giddiness swept over John Fearnes; the weakness

in his knees returned; his breath, he thought, had turned solid, choking him. The room was packed with dancers, hot beyond support. The music had become horrible. He turned sharply to avoid collision, and the object at the end of her chain swung into view: it was a small crucifix of black lava; every carved agonized detail was perfect, but it was attached to the chain at the bottom. It hung upside down. The time had come to speak. His parched lips were close to her ear. "It is the Mama who speaks the will of one whose tongue was split. Others who know this wait."

She sighed faintly. There was no other evidence that Mrs. Dembo had heard him. The music tore at him with a feverish and destructive intensity. He had failed again. Mrs. Dembo's fingers tightened on his wrist. She was replying. "In the darkness it is dangerous to light the candle of wisdom." Fearnes continued: "The light is guarded from eyes that see and are blind." There was an amber glimmer between her eyelids. "A fire without sticks cannot warm the eggs that have no shells." The crucifix had vanished. His giddiness changed to an acute sickness; it was absolutely necessary for him to get out into the air. John Fearnes led Mrs. Dembo to a side door, and they stood at the top of a narrow flight of steps leading into a darkness of massed and neglected shrubbery. The noise behind him lost all sense; it became an inarticulate and savage jabber; at intervals he heard the low boom of a drum. "I must speak to you," Fearnes said. He was shocked by the inappropriate and futile sanity of his words.

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RETURNED to Charleston he found the iron gate and doors of his dwelling unceremoniously open. There were negro soldiers in the hall. The old man, they casually informed him, had been killed last night. They knew nothing more than that and sullenly resented further questioning. John Fearnes saw Saby and cried at her: "What has happened to my father?" She, too, was ignorant; half insolent in manner. There were negroes in the drawing-room above, rifles and belts in the corners; but Allds Fearnes, incredibly emaciated, was alone. When his body had been carried away, under a guard of honor from the Carolina Rifle Club, John Fearnes began an existence of complete solitude. Saby had gone and he conducted all the practical details of living. The negroes continued to inhabit the lower floor; he drove them out, but they returned; a formal request to have them moved brought no reply. They gambled and slept and argued — turning his hall into a kind of guard-room — and, except for stealing his food and clothes, paid very little attention to him. Fearnes, against urgent advice, stubbornly remained. He sat mostly on the rear balcony, listening to the mocking-birds and the musical cries of the Charleston streets. He kept his father's papers together — if Beverley Nash and the black Republicans were successful in totally obliterating Charleston the register of St. Philip's Parish might be valuable.

The spirit of Charleston, however, was not entirely dead. There was, for example, a changeless love for it in himself, for its wharves and water and tranquil streets, its single houses and walled gardens. It was closer to him, more actual, than any abstraction of union. South Carolina was a reality, its history was his history, its annals

were the names of his ancestors. Charleston was the evidence of its pride and richness, and of its fall. It had fallen. Oh, very decidedly. It could never be born again; not in its past image. Grant had seen to that; reaching for a second term, he had made it impossible. None of Fearnes's associates agreed with him; they insisted the state would survive, glorious; Charleston, they contended, would be built again. Never, he knew, in the old form and mold. The very shape of life had changed. The cotton warehouses on East Bay Street would never be filled again — cotton had moved south and west. There could be no plantations without slaves. Without plantations the familiar cherished facts of South Carolina would become a tradition.

That, though, would live forever; Charleston would be deathless in the history of lovely cities. Its tradition was as tangible as stone and brick. He had fought, a last act of veneration, to leave it perfect. John Fearnes hadn't, through the years of the war, realized that. He saw now that success was never for a moment possible. It wasn't the North but the present which had conquered him. He didn't, at the last, very greatly mind. He preferred to belong to the past. There was a noise in the room behind him, and he found three negroes in uniform bending over an opened drawer. They were visibly confused and, muttering they had thought he was out, left quickly.

There was a long-drawn call outside. Fresh whiting! The fishermen had returned from the bay. Later he encountered a negro soldier, a captain, of a different spirit, on the stairs. He wasn't a colonel, Fearnes was told; Fearnes was nothing. If he got in the way he would be

less. The Captain's sword was bare. There was no one else near, the hall was darkening with evening, and John Fearnes said rapidly: "When the rooster sings the Ave Maria it is then time for the crows to end their chatter." The sword fell and slid clattering down the bare steps. The negro flattened himself against the railing for Fearnes to go by.

His feeling of sickness returned, accompanied by self-hatred. John Fearnes told himself that he had betrayed his birth; he was sinking deeper and deeper into infamy. He was tormented by what he knew. Yet the reason for his interest in — in primitive religion, his plans, justified it. He recalled Walker Irvine's command, his assertion that the Carolina Rifle Club must be obviously innocent. He was, therefore, proceeding in the best way open to him. What frightened him were the dark implications of the world he had entered. He opposed against them — for the escape of his soul — the serene and familiar phrases of the Book of Common Prayer, but its beauty was remote from him like its heaven. That region, spun of gold and blue, was hidden by an imminent pall. John Fearnes had a destructive illusion that his skin was turning darker; it was, of course, nonsense; but it persisted at the back of his mind. He woke suddenly at night and, hearing the negroes below, lost all sense of his identity; he might be black or white, living or dead. He didn't immediately know. He fought off an impulse to make a light and, getting the yellow chalk he kept hidden, draw an indicated pattern on the floor of his room and step within it. If he did, he argued, he would never come out again. John Fearnes would be visible for a moment and then his

place taken by . . . he couldn't quite face that. Yet. Anyhow, it was nonsense.

His actual plan couldn't be hurried. Negroes couldn't be hurried. He put himself in a position to see Mingo Harth — a powerful negro, pure in blood, with mad eyes — and heard echoes of his existence: Harth was to be nominated for mayor; he hardly ever left the house where he stayed on Calhoun Street; his supporters were always around the door. It was openly said that a year after his election there wouldn't be a white inhabitant in Charleston. That, it appeared, was Mingo Harth's political creed. It wasn't, John Fearnes thought, entirely fantastic. It wasn't fantastic at all . . . if Harth were elected. If, in other words, he lived.

For the present there was nothing Fearnes could do, except to remain alive himself. That was not to be taken for granted. However, the negroes in his house left him, and his belongings, severely alone. They never now went above the first floor. When he passed through the hall, there was an uneasy silence and rolling eyes. His house, in reality, lost favor as a place of congregation; the negroes moved out to the exterior steps, to the garden at the back, and began to fall away in numbers. He was conscious that long glances, hushed syllables, followed his passage through the streets.

He stayed away from the meetings of the Rifle club, avoided people and places he knew. Fearnes walked about Charleston at unusual hours, early in the morning and at dark; he had lost all consciousness of danger. He discovered remote and unfamiliar waterways by the Ponds on the Ashley River, at the end of Cannon Street and

along Beaupain; he explored the marshes of Town Creek, the old Parade Ground and King Street past Sansouci. He discovered Rose Lane, and Sires Street, the Mall and Aiken's Park, secret alleys and stone courts like traps. The arrogant or furtive or drunken negroes never interfered with him; instinctively — like the Captain on the stairs — they pressed away from his passage. Fearnes was, accordingly, surprised when a negro came through the upper room to his balcony. Colonel, he said, a lady was waiting to see him in the hall. A colored lady. "Who is she?" Fearnes demanded. The soldier didn't know. It was evident that he'd had no intention of asking. He was very much frightened, and, his message delivered, he quickly and silently vanished.

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Mrs. Dembo, talking in rushes of strange or of dislocated familiar facts, invested them with a secret menace like the dead air of Charleston. Her name was Floréal. There was a moon, and, in the acid light streaming through long windows, she danced. It was, she told John Fearnes, the bamboula. Floréal danced while he sat up in bed, with thin knees held by the tense circle of his wasted arms, watching her with a vision that fluctuated with the acute waves of physical sickness spreading through him. The bamboula began slowly. She stood with her body swaying in a remote listening attitude — like a slender tree at a first faint breath of wind — but later she was squatting on her hams and revolving in a violent rhythmic torment of muscles. The room, it seemed to John Fearnes, was

filled with a savage gale. She stopped suddenly, her body immobile and luminous in the moonlight. A faint and separate cold fire clung to her flexible waist. That, anyhow, he told himself, he could account for — Mrs. Dembo, Floréal, rubbed a preparation of phosphorus on her body.

It occurred to him that he could very easily kill her as she stood in the thin light: his father's pistols were still in the top drawer of the chest across the room. They were carefully and heavily loaded. He heard, in imagination, the smashing report of the shot that would end her. It would, John Fearnes was certain, fill all the city with its detonation. It would clear Charleston of its vileness and leave it purified in a serene night. It would restore him to honor. He moved, and, at once vague and definite, she turned and faced him. Mrs. Dembo moved toward him, and her hips were like stirred cymbals. John Fearnes was catching rats in the cellar of his house — he had laid a board to the top of a long disused rain-barrel; there was some rotten shark's meat in the barrel, and at intervals a rat, often immense in size and blanched with age, walked up the board and fell from sight. Fearnes killed the rats with a club. The club was foul with blood and hairs. When he had a sufficient number of rats he carried them to the balcony where his father and he had been accustomed to sit. Now it was occupied by a long box with rude wooden bars across its face. There he was busy for a little with the carcasses of the rats. Floréal, Mrs. Dembo, talked about strange uncertain things. Sometimes he half understood her and sometimes, when she relapsed into words and sentences peculiar to black New Orleans, he

was lost. A zombi, he gathered, was a ghost. Zombi and a poisonous weed called gris-gris. She was drunk, it was a bamboche — with a naked arm about his throat she held a glass to his lips. There was a story — a white woman, mistress of a great plantation on the River, offended Floréal and she had contaminated the feathers in her pillow. Dirt from a grave and worse. She made a little coffin and fashioned an image in rancid tallow. Tallow and pieces of horn and horse-hair. Floréal roasted it before a slow fire, and the mistress of the plantation had withered. Just withered, she said. John Fearnes didn't doubt it. Negroes came at night, mounting the stairs like shadows. They gathered in the long drawing-room, on the unspeakably soiled Turkey carpet. There were bright fragments of glass over the carpet from the broken lusters of the chandeliers. The heavy box was borne in from the balcony; and, in a gloom of night and evilly burning candles, John Fearnes was the Papa accompanying Mrs. Dembo, who was Mama. She was naked with the exception of sandals and a red handkerchief; there was a blue cord about his waist. Mrs. Dembo, Floréal, drew in yellow chalk on sweating black bodies; there were initiations. A bowl of blood and a caricature of masculine power. She stood on the box and communicated messages, commands, from it.

"Mingo Harth," she cried. "Mingo Harth."

A voice replied: "Mingo say he ain't come."

At times, in the intense gloom, there was a dance that ended in convulsions. Mrs. Dembo — no other woman was ever present — transcended all possible bamboulas. When that was done John Fearnes was wholly exhausted.

He lay without food, scarcely breathing, in his bed. Mrs. Dembo slept heavily. That would be an excellent time to kill her, but he was too weak. He could never, in a lifetime, reach the chest of drawers that held the pistols. Mrs. Dembo cried: "Mingo Harth," and there was the answering intelligence, "Mingo say he ain't come." She grew angry and spoke confidentially into the box under her foot. The negroes in the darkened drawing-room were uneasy. Floréal opened the barred face of the box, and the slow convolutions of a gorged snake were visible. The negroes were held in a voiceless and immobile terror. The snake uncoiled slowly in the fluctuating candlelight. Mrs. Dembo caressed it. The snake moved in a heavy distended undulation. John Fearnes, later, had to force it back into the box. His hands slipped impotently on the cold utter smoothness of its body. It dragged at the feebleness of his legs. Mrs. Dembo — they were alone — laughed. She sat negligently in a bright red, a soiled, dressing-gown. "He'll come," she said confidently. "I know black niggers. I got to go back to New Orleans," she continued. "Nobody decent could stay here, black or white." He repeated in a wondering voice the word decent. It was, he thought, a quaint and very interesting word. He had always been interested in negro magic. But it was a dangerous subject. He knew of highly bred women, ladies, and civilized men, who had been destroyed by it. Floréal was making patterns on the floor with a long cowhide whip. It was like a thin and vicious and animated snake. "He'll come," Mrs. Dembo said. "Don't you be afraid of that. When he does Mama will show him what it is to pay no attention to her." She

became largely unintelligible: "Efé Bruton Efó. Mama Lleneca. Otan qui Ibane." "You don't understand," she told him contemptuously. "You don't understand anything. Cuba," she sighed. "New Orleans is nothing compared to Cuba. They can get juju for the Fambas there. It isn't goat's blood. Nañigos. Brujeria. You think you are superior. Look at you." She laughed. She moved the whip so that its lash fell across John Fearnes's foot. He gazed at it curiously. An especially wicked and attenuated snake. "The white race won't last. It's too weak. Like the paper in a book. Night is deeper than day. The white race is weak where it ought to be strong. Tell me where that is." The whip twisted and turned on the defiled carpet. "I suppose," he said laboriously, "you are referring to the principle of life." Mrs. Dembo derided him. "The principle of life. That is how you have to say it. You can't even name it." There was, it seemed to him, a certain justice in her contempt. A race thin like white paper —

The darkness was scarcely diluted by the candles on the drawing-room overmantel. A sibilant whisper rose from the gathered and huddled negroes. Mingo Harth! Mingo Harth! He had entered confidently, with an arrogant and challenging voice; but as he moved forward, his confidence deserted him, the challenge vanished from his tones. "Here I am, Mingo Harth. I'm here and — and that's what I am." Mrs. Dembo stood inside a ring, a line, of yellow chalk. She opened the bars that held the snake and the snake slowly emerged. In the thick gloom it seemed to be immense. Endless. John Fearnes thought it would never stop unwinding out of the box. Mrs. Dembo, Floréal, spoke to it. "This man, this Mingo Harth,

he wouldn't listen to you. You spoke, but Mingo Harth was deaf." There was an imminent murmur from the back of the room. The heavy smooth movements of the snake were audible. Suddenly there was the sweep and fall of the other and thinner — the more wicked — snake. John Fearnes had a sensation of cobwebs on his face. He tried in vain to brush them away. A long shudder seized him. Then he shook with a silent laughter — he, John Fearnes, was rifle master of the Carolina Rifle Club. He marched upright and honorable-appearing carrying a bouquet of Charleston violets. He was Colonel John Fearnes.

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THE next day his isolation was complete; an intense stillness seemed to have fallen about him; he was the sole inhabitant of a circle without horizon or perspective. He unwrapped the oiled silk from one of his father's pistols and sat with it before him on a table. It was connected with a resolve, a necessity, lost in the darkness of his mind. The pistol had a use. Was it connected with himself? His emaciated hand, yellow like a lemon peel, closed on the walnut grip. Then he remembered — it was too late. Its report would never, now, clear away the ruin that had overtaken him. He turned from it to Allds Fearnes's papers, the register of St. Philip's Parish. They stopped at the tenth of May, Seventeen thirty-one. The handwriting, at the end, was thin and crumbling, but it preserved a certain elegance. It broke off in the middle of a page. At the table his father had left, with the same pen,

John Fearnes wrote: "Ann Daughter of s^d Joseph Wragg and Judith his wife was born."

It was noon and he copied, from his father's notes, the records of forgotten Charleston births and deaths until the room was dark. He rose suddenly, cramped and with aching eyes, and crossed the drawing-room to the bell-rope. He was in the act of pulling it sharply, to inquire why the candles hadn't been lighted, when he remembered there was no one to light them. The servants had gone. Even Saby no longer came to the house. Life had been interrupted by the rascally North and the rascally negroes. However, he could light the candles; it was better to do that himself, unconquered, than to surrender to General Grant. Charleston hadn't surrendered. It would be necessary for him to prepare supper, and he hoped no one would find him at that. While it was proper for a gentleman to cook on a military campaign, it was a very different affair in a Charleston mansion.

Carrying a candlestick in the vast high gloom of the house, he carefully closed the shutters of the kitchen. Later he returned to the balcony above. The night was quiet, close, and heavy. He would sit awhile and rest, he thought, and then return to the records of St. Philip's Parish. John Fearnes was bothered about the spelling of the various Greens. The original records had been criminally careless. He was bent over his table — it was late afternoon — when he heard the passage of feet on the stair. Fearnes rose impatiently — it was Ashton Charville. He had had, he said, no idea what John was busy with. A list of old Charleston names! He would have to put that aside and come with him to the Rifle Club. A son

had been born to Dobbs Fenwicke and there was, as customary, a bowl of punch at Fenwicke's expense. Fearnes protested, he couldn't leave his records; but Charville, with a positive good humor, forced him out of the house.

The Rifle Club rooms in the Trenholm building were full of men and raised voices. It was far too noisy and crowded for John Fearnes; he withdrew to an inconspicuous seat. Walker Irvine found him there. "John," he proceeded affectionately, "I was glad the Postle affair turned out the way it did. You were saved a lot of trouble. I have it on absolute authority that Mingo Harth has vanished from South Carolina forever. There was something else, too: you never liked being rifle master; we forced it on you, really, because of your extraordinary sense of duty, your character; and we all agree that if you want to give it up we can't stop you."

He thanked Walker Irvine. "I would like to have more time for myself," he acknowledged. "I am finishing the register of St. Philip's Parish begun by my father. It is very difficult because the names weren't accurately entered by the clerks of the parish. When that is done, perhaps I might be active in the club again." Irvine said: "Of course. No one is more highly thought of than you." John Fearnes escaped with a sensation of relief. His house, after the confusion around the punch-bowl, was delightfully still. He cooked a small satisfactory supper and then returned to the register. There were, he found, omissions in his father's work, whole lines left out; and, after a week of tremendous thought, he saw that all the work would have to be done again. Instead of taking up Allds Fearnes's task he must go back to the

beginning. The notes he had were untrustworthy; he'd have to refer to the originals.

It got, he thought, cold very soon; there were high winds and rain; the waves broke over the South Battery wall; Charleston Bay was white. He had a small recurring sum of money from Georgia, through his mother's estate, and he was obliged to spend most of that for coal. He moved his table close to the open fire in the drawing-room; he deserted the balcony and stayed longer by the stove in the kitchen. Then, at an opened window, he heard a cry from the street: "Whiting, fresh whiting!" The fishermen were back from the outer bay. What was the negro rhyme his father had liked to repeat? "Load ma gun with sugar-plum. Shoot dat nung gal." The warm evening, the singing of the mocking-birds, entered his blood, and he determined to go to Louis Kenake's restaurant, on King Street, and have shrimps and Egyptian peas for supper.

Greatly to his surprise Louis Kenake had gone. He asked a man, standing in front of where the restaurant should be, what had become of Louis; but, evidently a new-comer to Charleston, he didn't know. John Fearnes was puzzled. The city looked strange. He then proceeded to Broad Street, to the Courier bulletin board — he would discover there all that was happening — but the bulletin board had gone too. There had been a great activity of building — the bridges, for example, across the Ashley had been replaced. The Yankees burned them. He followed Tradd Street to the Breakwater, to Cantini's Wharf. There, Fearnes decided, he would wait for the fleet; when it came in he'd get some whiting and have supper, as usual, home. What the devil, he thought, what the devil! The Breakwater was so

changed he wouldn't have recognized it. Chisolm's mill was totally different; Toale's factory simply didn't exist.

He went hastily back and turned, in a mental confusion, into Legaré Street. He was, John Fearnes was certain, getting queer. The stone steps at the entrance to his dwelling were broken; he hadn't noticed that before. They must be fixed. Another time. The Cherokee roses that banked the steps and door were green. Very soon they would be white. They were, a perfumed and immaculate cascade. But the blossoms lasted only a little while. It was surprising how soon the petals covered the stone. However, they'd come back again. Roses were very satisfactory that way. He saw very little of them, though, for he preferred to sit at the back of the house. On the balcony where he had played as a very little child. But there were, now, no chuck-will's-widows, birds that used to come softly crying with the dusk.

John Fearnes sat on the balcony for longer periods than formerly; he was there, in summer, more than at the table over St. Philip's register. His eyes made the copying very laborious; his hand trembled unaccountably. In addition he was tired. His cooking was very simple now, but by the time he carried the coal from where it was left on the side porch to the kitchen it got to be damned heavy. It was a long journey to the second floor. John Fearnes looked querulously into a mirror. With a sudden exterior consciousness he saw a very old man. His hair was white. But there was still a trace of youth, of candor, in his faded eyes, an expression of gentleness and a slight wonder. His face was scarred, drawn, as though by the memory of insuperable pain.

X.

TEN

From his counting-room in the second story of the brick block that largely occupied India Wharf Nicholas Elliset could see, above the masts of the shipping, the semaphoric telegraph on the observatory that crowned Central Wharf. At one time the signalling had been done with flags; the present arrangement with two arms was a vast improvement. Nicholas Elliset was, now, looking for news of his barque Celestina, she was more than three months overdue, out of China; but there was no sign that the Celestina had been sighted off Nantasket. It was April, but bitterly cold, and there were two fires of cannel coal in the counting-room. Two long, high desks accommodated eight standing clerks each; the room was still except for the scratching of pens and the sputter of the fat coal; and Elliset returned to his secluded office. He was a spare man with an evenly brown face, a high-bridged imperious nose, and a determined mouth; handsome but hard-bitten; and it was evident that he was nearer fifty than forty. A handsome cold man who walked with a firm alertness and had a notable gleam in his grey eyes.

His position and importance in Boston were clearly evident; it was a question if, at that time, there were a merchant in the city more characteristic of all that was held to be desirable. A flavor of humor, however, a satirical

habit of speech, saved him from being merely autocratic; and he was so successful, his family had always been so successful, that a pleasant ease conditioned the exact demands of his temper. This, however, did nothing to correct the certainty of his opinions and views. His prejudices. He wasn't, socially or mentally, flexible. Nicholas Elliset, the truth was, hated flexibility. He hated uncertainty as well: all mental foggery he classed with the fogs that endangered the progress of his ships; that in his youth had made his own problems of navigation both difficult and dangerous.

There was, for example, no present doubt in his mind about the course to be pursued by his younger son, Ambrose. None in the world. He had told Ambrose to come to India Wharf at eleven, and at five minutes after eleven he would explain what life was to hold for him. He had been, he considered, very patient with Ambrose . . . why, the boy had passed twenty. Ambrose was graduated from Harvard a year ago. Boys were different now from those of his own youth, different and nothing like so able. Still, he had no doubts of Ambrose's fundamental qualities; damn it, he was both an Elliset and a Bradwick. He would have to be correct. The elder Elliset, though, was glad that he had been himself. Instead of Ambrose. It was his secret opinion that Ambrose was having a devilish poor time out of life. Over twenty and on shore! In Boston! Nancred, his chief clerk, came to the door. "Mr. Ambrose Elliset is here," he announced. Ambrose entered immediately afterward.

He was tall and fair-haired and delicate; he, too, had a high-bridged nose, but it was thin and supersensitive;

his eyes were grey in color, but totally without a satirical gleam. His whole countenance, his entire being, was passionately serious. "Good-morning, father," he said, and sat down. It was plain that he was nervous. "Good-morning, Ambrose," his father replied. "It is pleasant to see you here. Ambrose, I have said nothing to you in the past few months in reference to the future, because I was waiting for some declaration from you. There has been none and so I am obliged to make it." He referred to a paper beside him. "It is arranged for you to sail on the Fannie Bradwick for the West Indies the end of the month. Supercargo. That will bring you back in time to prepare for China in the fall. I shall want you to stay at Canton, with Perkins and Company, for a year at least."

"Thank you," Ambrose said firmly, "that is all very thoughtful, but I can't do it. I can't do any of it." He stopped, gazing fully into his father's questioning eyes. "If you will allow me I'll explain why." Nicholas Elliset agreed that it might be wise. "I hope," his son added, "you will not think I am only impertinent." Elliset nodded shortly. "I do not," Ambrose spoke decidedly, "want to go into a mercantile career. I don't believe in it. I'd be no good. I don't, to be really honest, approve of such a life. I don't approve of the present organization of society, specially as it is in Boston, on that base."

What, then, Elliset asked, did he approve of?

"I am coming to that," Ambrose proceeded. "Perhaps I had better explain at once that I am going to Brook Farm. I have entered my name and had a long talk with George Ripley. He was very kind to me. That is what I mean by disliking commerce. If you will forgive me, it is nothing

better than organized piracy. You are a pirate, our families have always been pirates. I am not criticizing this but only explaining as much of myself as you will care to hear."

"Brook Farm," the elder repeated. "Is that the socialistic colony at Roxbury?" Ambrose assented. "Well, since you have been so frank with me," Nicholas Elliset went on, "I must be equally truthful with you. Brook Farm is a sort of feeble nuisance, a refuge for futile and dissatisfied preachers and unsound women. I have, naturally, heard of it, just as I have heard of this Emerson and a Miss Fuller and Alcott. People, I understand, who write books or poetry or some such thing. Writing people. They must, I take it, exist; poetry exists; but what connection it has with us escapes me. Anyhow, it is impossible for me to regard this seriously. My dear Ambrose, you will sail on the Fannie Bradwick, I am sure."

"I am sorry, I won't," Ambrose asserted. "I tell you I hate life the way it is. It's all horribly wrong. Rotten. Society is growing worse and worse. The individual is being destroyed. There almost are no individuals left. No one, today, can breathe. The world is utterly material and selfish. There has to be an escape. An escape and a return. Emmanuel Kant has shown us the way and it only remains for us to follow him. The soul must be expressed," Ambrose declared. "It must be free. Unitarianism has failed; Ripley made that plain; the immensities and eternities have been forgotten. There must be a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor; the thinker and worker will have to be combined in the same persons; we must guarantee the highest mental freedom; away from the fatal pressures of competitive institutions."

"No competition?" Nicholas Elliset asked reasonably. "That would mean no fast ships, no beautiful ships, and no remarkable voyages. The Columbia, then, wouldn't have carried our ensign around the world. America would never have fetched a cargo of pepper from the Fijis. My dear Ambrose, there would have been no Revolution, no America at all." None of that, Ambrose replied, was important. "Men and not nationalities are what we require. In your world the spirit has been debased. You live on a system of slaves, physical and spiritual and intellectual. The Government is nothing more than your counting-house. You are not a shade more enlightened than Hamilton or George Washington. You are not even a Federalist, but a Tory. That is to say a political tyrant."

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When Ambrose, in a stiff and flushed dignity, departed he left Nicholas Elliset in a state of meditation. The severity of his countenance, of his mood, was as usual marred by the satirical shadow on his lips. He wasn't, he hoped, anything so ordinary as the conventional outraged parent; he wasn't, the further truth was, very highly incensed at Ambrose; he could still allow for the vagaries of youth. Of youth but not of an Elliset. That was the main difficulty in the present situation — Nicholas Elliset's requirements for his sons, few and rigid, lay within the circle of family tradition. It was not, now, a question of accomplishment, but of a maintained position. It wasn't, for example, absolutely necessary for Ambrose to sail as supercargo on the Fannie Bradwick; nothing would

happen to their pre-eminence if he failed to spend a year at Canton with Perkins and Company. It wasn't the form, the actual observance, of these things that was imperative, but an adherence to a principle. There was an infinity of occupations open to Ambrose: political, in the way of diplomacy; marine insurance or admiralty law; he could occupy in London the place held by his elder brother, William, in Marseilles; or, indifferent to all this, he might be merely a gentleman and follow the newly developing occupation of ocean racing.

Nicholas Elliset had spoken of supercargo simply because it had been most obvious, in the direct line of the family endeavor. Following the sea for a short time would at once harden Ambrose and give him a period of freedom, the widest possible horizon, before marriage and Boston — Elliset and Sons — closed around him. His own youth, Elliset remembered, had been wide and free: in 1812, the year of the naval war, when he was fifteen, he had sailed on the brig Recovery for the Northwest Coast and China — the Cape Verdes and Falklands, Galápagos and the Marquesas. In spite of the swivel guns on the bulwarks and four cannon heavily shotted with lagrange, Indians had killed five of the crew in Nootka Sound. He, Nicholas, had fought with a musket and then a boarding pike. He remembered peaceful California harbors, sweet with the bells of Spanish missions, where they traded illegally and drank native wine with the cheerful fathers. They secured, in those days, magnificent black sea-otter skins in return for strap-iron trade chisels. Jew's-harps, buttons, colored duffels, and pocket mirrors.

The names of fragrant and far-off places returned to

Nicholas Elliset: Callao and Concepción, Coquimbo and Benkulen and Analabu. At seventeen — that would be in Eighteen fourteen — he had commanded the brig Charlotte to the Carribean Sea, and under twenty taken the Hesperides, two hundred and ten tons, to China . . . Hawaii and Luzón and Formosa, Lintin Island and pirate junks, Portuguese lands, the Bogue forts and the Pagoda Anchorage at Whampoa. That had been an easy passage, but the return was stiffer, with head winds off Borneo and, apparently, all the treacherous water in the world under his ship's bows. The bitterness of gales, pinching weeks of short provisions, however, had been mitigated by flowery harbors. The trace of a smile touched his set lips. The singing girls of Zamboanga! Nicholas Elliset very much doubted if Ambrose would ever dance on the beach of Owhyhee with charmers in garlands to a primitive music mingled with the surf loud on the coral reef and with the trade wind in the nipa palms. He did indeed. He couldn't, somehow, even see Ambrose in such a situation.

But that, of course, was very much in Ambrose's favor. Looking back on his youth, Nicholas couldn't regard it with entire approbation. Minute enamelled girls in gold headdresses and warm white wine. No, he really couldn't recommend his course to Ambrose; but, then, everything, even the sea, had changed since he was young. It was now practically safe and entirely moral. Adventure had departed from the East. The world, trade, resembled himself, grown middle-aged and cautious. The earlier years would not have been suitable for Ambrose. His thoughts returned to the problem presented by his son.

He didn't actually mind Ambrose's attitude of rebellion, he was merely afraid that, under the pressure of youth, he would forget the necessities, the dignity, of his position and future. He might become committed to some idiotic formula that would permanently affect his soundness. Together with William, four years his senior, Ambrose would come into a very great deal. He would be a recognized power on the continents and islands and seas of the earth. In view of that, Nicholas Elliset didn't want him to start, even for the shortest tack, on a wrong course. His own acts, however reprehensible they might appear now, in Boston, were all part of his major advance and interests; when, at twenty-six, he had retired from the sea, he had brought himself under a sharp moral discipline; he had, he felt, fully met his responsibilities.

His success had been almost entirely satisfactory — the one element which evaded him was the deep habit of humor, of scepticism persisting in the whole face of Boston. He was at once secure in the fact of his pre-eminence and doubtful of its importance: Boston he considered to be the greatest city in America, in the world, and yet, at moments of weariness and detachment, he derided its complacency, its pretensions and habits. Because of that, Nicholas Elliset realized, he wasn't universally esteemed by his own narrow and powerful class. His satirical habit of speech was at once admitted and deplored. Especially by women. He was, he knew, regarded in some quarters as unbearably cold and even vain. The elaboration of his life — the love of luxury gained in the East — was criticized.

That, though, the public reception of his failing, didn't

disturb him; he was concerned only by its implications in himself. His doubt he looked on as a corruption in his blood, the evidence of an aging and worn strain, the payment exacted for generations of pleasure and success. In Ambrose, apparently, this had taken another and slightly more dangerous turn — Ambrose, unsalted by any humor, had rebelled against all society. He had reached the point of threatening to desert it: an act, Nicholas Elliset considered, as fatal as the desertion of a ship. Whatever his son's deductions were, they must be kept within the bounds of a necessary discipline, restricted to no worse than occasional comment. On the positive and hopeful side he was, naturally, quite wrong; nothing could be done for people, for society, in general. Nothing, that was, beyond providing them with a firm and wise government. People must be dealt with fairly and courageously . . . and with understanding.

There always had been, there always would be, classes, the preferred and the deficient, the rich and the poor. The inherent poor were not fitted by experience or qualities to be rich and he'd be damned if he could see why the rich, the privileged, should voluntarily take on the limitations of poverty, hamper themselves with the disabilities of failure. He had been, for example, as the master of a ship, responsible for the life of every man on board; in a wreck it was his supreme duty to see the meanest galley boys in the boats before he left the quarter-deck; but there he was superior and not equal to them. No equality could ever exist between a master and his crew; none existed on earth. Any misapprehension of that fundamental fact must result only in disaster. It was absolutely necessary for

Ambrose to understand this. He would, Nicholas Elliset didn't doubt, eventually; but he must not, meanwhile, make the serious error of compromising his dignity.

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It was, Nicholas Elliset observed, past noon and, in a greatcoat lined with imperial sables — the days grew colder in place of even hinting at the approach of spring — he went down to the wharf, crowded with merchandise and an amazing diversity of men, and made his way to India Street. He continued over State Street, purely from habit, since the institution of Change, like so much else, was practically destroyed. The new Exchange Building, however, would soon be completed; in the future he would meet the merchants and underwriters and shipowners of Boston there through the middle of the day; but he regretted the old custom of lingering on the street; he doubted if the new would be so pleasant. He found, the fact was, no one of his intimate acquaintance standing between Commercial and Washington Streets, and he proceeded directly to Topliff's News Room. Nothing yet had been heard of his barque Celestina. The reading-room was crowded, the air filled with the names of ships and ports and cargoes. Nicholas came squarely against Jabash Dyer, and, following a swift impulse, asked him a question. "Jabash," he proceeded, "you have poets and such people to dinner; tell me something about what, I believe, is called Brook Farm."

Dyer answered him indirectly. "I'll tell you privately about the poets. You know, Nicholas, that I hate to talk,

specially at the table, and you know Sophia. You'd think she would hear enough at lectures, but it seems she doesn't . . . and so now and then I have a literary person there to chatter. They eat and drink and chatter and it saves me a lot of trouble. I haven't the least idea what it is they talk about, but Sophia seems to follow it. Women, Nicholas, like poets. Particularly if they are suffering. A wretched literary man will cheer the most sensible woman in no time at all."

"I didn't ask you to explain why you had poets to dinner," Nicholas Elliset pointed out, "but what Brook Farm was." He thought it was necessary to add that he had no interest in such a subject. "Ambrose was talking about it this morning." Brook Farm, Jabash explained, was an experiment. "I happen to know about it because I was asked to subscribe. Ripley wanted thirty thousand dollars to found it, and proposed to organize a joint stock company. A guaranteed fixed interest secured by the real estate. I declined. It is devoted, I am told, to the sacredness of toil — the inexpressible is to be expressed by washing dishes and planting and reaping. The women wear trousers."

Nicholas Elliset said that Dyer was merely being funny about it. "Trousers," Dyer repeated firmly; "at Brook Farm men and women are social equals. But it is very high-minded, Nicholas, don't misunderstand me. Very transcendental. Whatever the devil that means. I had Emerson explain it, and Miss Fuller, and Bronson Alcott — an old ass — but it is beyond me." Elliset was relieved; he didn't believe Ambrose could be serious about women in trousers. Jabash Dyer added: "There is a mortgage — I'm not certain but there isn't a second —

held by Josiah Quincy and Wilder for the Western Railroad Corporation." Nicholas Elliset nodded indifferently; he had dismissed Brook Farm from mind. It was unavoidable, however, that he should speak of it to his wife.

It was past dusk and a maid was occupied with Caroline Elliset at her dressing-table. Nicholas, in place of a coat, had a flowing yellow silk Chinese robe over his formal attire. "I asked Ambrose to come to the counting-house this morning," he proceeded; "I thought it was time for him to do something, to get out of Boston for a little; I wanted him to sail on the Fannie Bradwick, to the West Indies; but he had other plans. It's in his head to join a mad scheme called Brook Farm."

"He spoke to me about it yesterday," Caroline admitted. "I hope you weren't severe with him." Nicholas was mildly annoyed. "Of course not. You ought to know me better than that. So far as I was concerned, I told him, he didn't have to make up his mind to anything at once. I simply want him to consider." Caroline Elliset spoke calmly. "It's a girl." Nicholas was frankly surprised. "Are you certain you're right? Remember it is Ambrose and not just any boy. I have never seen him show the slightest interest in that direction. He seems so impersonal." His wife merely repeated her assertion. "I don't know anything, really; in a way I had to guess, but I am right. I got something out of him about a girl who taught at Brook Farm. She has a curious name, Sabel Luin, and she's the daughter of a reformer of some sort. He was either a minister or a professor at Harvard, I forget which; but he gave it up, Ambrose explained, to escape from materialism."

"That was the way Ambrose talked to me," Nicholas continued. "He was very severe with me and said I was no better than a pirate and a tyrant. Rather unjust, don't you think, on top of our electing William Henry Harrison, the very cloak of Jackson? It wasn't my fault he died and Tyler came into the Presidency."

"When you get like this," Caroline declared, "nothing can be done with you. Nothing. I wish you wouldn't. It may be serious about Ambrose and it may not. Everything, I think, depends on the girl. Everything usually does. If he had only gone around more it would be safer, of course. He has had no experience at all and that's always dangerous." Nicholas Elliset studied her intently. Women, even Caroline, were amazing. Her blood at once resembled his and was totally different: it was distinguished, long in America, but she came from a line of celebrated and bitter Puritan divines. Preachers and scholars. She was, as a result, very fine; the fineness, a surface judgment would have declared, of crystal; but that, Nicholas recognized, would be wrong. The trouble with Caroline — if it was a trouble — was the perfection of her self-control. Mere irresponsible nature had no chance with her at all. The passions of love and anger had never overcome her; she was capable of the latter, but she expressed it in an increasing cold reserve, a frigid correctness; about love he didn't know. After nearly twenty years of happy marriage he didn't, for a fact.

Caroline was happy with him, he was certain; she had been a perfect, a miraculous wife; but he had a secret conviction that she never allowed the profound depths of her feeling to be touched. It might be that he

was incapable of reaching, stirring, them. He didn't, however, believe that it could be done. The fires of the early Bradwicks had been cooled, he thought, to that extent. Yet here she was completely allowing for the greatest degree of folly in Ambrose. She had coolly asserted the most frivolous of truths about girls. He felt a little aggrieved. Why, if Caroline had wanted to discuss life on that plane, hadn't she admitted him to her confidence long ago? It did look as though she questioned his knowledge of the world . . . of women.

"I didn't know there was a girl to be considered," he admitted formally. "If that is so, the whole situation is more serious than I judged. A greater firmness, in spite of what you said, might be necessary." Girls, but children really, in headdresses of gold and insidious wine in cups. Caroline Elliset repeated almost impatiently: "We can tell nothing until we see her. We may take it for granted she won't make any difficulties with Ambrose." He said: "Certainly not. The daughter of some penny philosopher and an Elliset. Damn it, Caroline, I'd rather have her on the stage than at Brook Farm."

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Caroline Elliset made no reply to that, and Nicholas said in a tone of mild surprise: "The Houqua emeralds! I haven't seen them in I don't know how long." She was fastening on her wrists bracelets, or wide bands rather, of deep-green flashing emeralds. They had been given to Nicholas Elliset's mother by the celebrated Chinese merchant. "They are too overwhelming," Caroline explained;

"and I'm pale for emeralds, but these aren't near my face." After a few minutes she followed Nicholas down to the first floor, to a small reception-room on the left of the formal shallow hall of their house. The dining-room was above, an oval interior flattened at the end walls in white with two portraits by Copley — Nicholas Elliset's great-aunt Marianne, in pink muslin, with an enormous Leghorn hat heaped with ribbon and tulle, and his great-grandfather, the model of an autocratic provincial merchant, with a sword, and his hand resting on a table beside a bowl of tropical fruit, significant of his trade with the West Indies.

A china loving-cup of hot spiced punch was passed around the dining-table, and the dinner — there were twelve present — began. Mrs. Thomas Butall was at Nicholas Elliset's right; she had white hair with a naturally high color — the exact habit, Nicholas thought, of a port-drinking squire — and she was aggressively interested in the advancement, by paid or personal monologues, of general learning. There was, however, no trace of transcendentalism about her; she was even innocent of Jabash Dyer's liberal attitude toward poets — there were no intellects to be observed, except in a professional capacity, in her house. Nicholas repeated Jabash's comments on poetry and women and she answered in her customary sharp decisive manner. "That is Jabash, of course. As a result you never know whether to go to the Dyers's or not. Of course you go, but it's a question, just the same. I know very little about poetry, and nothing about poets, but I have the greatest belief in an admirable lecture. It is at once elevating and engaging. Through the

winter I see to it that my family, my whole family, Nicholas, hear three lectures a week. I send my servants to the ones proper for them."

That, now, sounded very dull to Nicholas Elliset. His memories of the picturesque past had momentarily increased his detachment from the present, from Boston. He saw, in imagination, the Butall family, led by the woman at his side and terminated by little Thomas, filing into the Athenæum. He, at least, had seen life, the East; it hadn't come to him by emasculated report. He had been young in the adventurous manner appropriate to youth, and now he was middle-aged, satisfied to be tranquil. He told himself that he was satisfied, but the memories, a sense of inner disturbance, persisted. Nicholas didn't approve of it, it couldn't affect him, but it was there.

His gaze fell upon Caroline, with the Houqua emeralds on her arms, and he realized again how precisely beautiful she was; or, rather, how correctly handsome. He made that modification deliberately. She ought to be beautiful, he added; she just missed it by the absence of some necessary intangible quality. She hadn't been transformed. He didn't precisely know what he meant by that, but it satisfied him. A perfect wife, he added. As a wife, for him, no desirable fact was missing. She would be impressively handsome, dignified, to the end. Perverse pictures filled his mind . . . of undignified and merely pretty girls. Reprehensible girls. Charming girls out of his youth. Girls with knives and passions like knives. Old lost moons. Perfumed and silver moons. They all revolved in his memory like a kaleidoscope at once bright and tender.

Ambrose, he saw, seated beside his mother, was com-

pletely silent. Nicholas felt that, now, he understood him fully. The Brook Farm project, and quite aside from any feminine influence, was the sheer revolt of youth against the stagnation of safety. In Ambrose the revolt was intellectual. That was the form it assumed in his imagination. Unfortunately it couldn't, Nicholas Elliset believed, be encouraged in that direction. It bred eccentricities not only of the mind but in dress. Ambrose would be laid open to mad schemes and schemers. When the dinner was over and the Ellisets alone Ambrose came to him. "I wasn't entirely honest this morning," he began; "I only told you about Brook Farm. There is more: I am going to be married. I tried to tell mother but, for some reason I couldn't make out, she made it very hard for me."

"I am certain that wasn't her intention," Nicholas replied, "and God knows it wouldn't be mine. I'd be glad to hear all you care to tell me." There was a great deal, Ambrose admitted. "You won't approve of it, or of Sabel, at first. I'm sorry. It can't be helped. It doesn't affect my respect for you. Damn it, it does!" he exclaimed. "I can't respect what you are. What you represent. You might regard Sabel as a part of my protest against you. Against Boston. The old Boston, that is. A new one is rising, but you can't, or you won't, recognize it. I heard Mrs. Butall patronizing literature, and it was all I could do not to throw my plate at her. Poets are the salvation of the earth," Ambrose declared. "If any salvation is possible. You are all very polite about the prophets in the Bible, but blind to the prophets in Boston. Alcott and Emerson and George Ripley. You only know what you are told; you only feel what you inherit; you can't see or feel independently."

Nicholas Elliset said reasonably: "I thought you were going to tell me about your engagement." Ambrose spoke austerely. "Sabel, Sabel Luin, has a glorious soul. Her mother died when she was young, and her father was able to give her a rational education. She had read the great German philosophers before she was fifteen; now, at twenty, she is a teacher. A teacher of the future," he added lyrically. "She is changing the leaden minds of today into the gold of tomorrow. We want to take the little school at Brook Farm together." Nicholas asked:

"What does she look like?"

Ambrose Elliset glared at him. "I didn't think," he said, "I didn't realize that, in addition to the rest, you were a sensualist."

"That appears to me to have been a very innocent question," the elder Elliset admitted. "If you don't realize it now, then you will find out later that the looks of a woman are quite important. Perhaps I ought to add to a gentleman." Ambrose broke in on him tempestuously. "If there is anything I won't be called, it's a gentleman. At least not what you mean by one: a conventional coward. A frightened Federalist. A hypocritical Republican. I wouldn't insult Sabel by even thinking what she looks like. I don't know. It's her spirit I love. We are not going to be married in your sense at all. Oh, there will be a ceremony, but only to save trouble and legal complications. A concession. This will be a marriage of minds. We recognize that the flesh exists, but we refuse to pander to it. Our children will be beautifully and highly conceived. As a sacred duty. I am prepared to have you make it as difficult as possible."

"It seems difficult enough without me," Nicholas commented; "I can't just think what I'd say that you would listen to. But let me advise you not to tell your mother what you said to me. Not in the same words. Women are sometimes very light-minded."

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It grew, on the following day, as unseasonably warm as it had been cold. On Nicholas Elliset's return to his house for dinner, in other words at two o'clock, he was certain buds had appeared on the lilac bushes since his departure for the counting-house that morning. Boston was enveloped in a sunny haze, the air was at once faintly salt and still. It was oppressive in the house, Boston was oppressive; he had a sudden taste to drive out into the country and see the first traces of green along the fields, the beginning red in the maple trees. In his gig a further development occurred to him — he would proceed to West Roxbury and at least drive past Brook Farm. Since it was possible that Ambrose would become a part of it he, Nicholas, was obligated to a certain interest. He wondered how much of his curiosity lay in the direction of the social experiment and how much in — what was her name? Sabel, Sabel Luin. It was at once a strange name and easy to remember. A very fluid name to pronounce: Sabel Luin —

He smiled at the memory of Ambrose's indignation when he asked what she looked like. A little humor would do Ambrose a great deal of good; a sense of humor, and experience. Education took the place of neither. The

warmth increased, the haze thickened; the landscape was vague and soft and remote. He reached Roxbury without at once recognizing it, but Nicholas Elliset had no trouble in identifying Brook Farm. Almost at once, in a region of pines by the Charles River, he came upon a group of men, mostly young, in brown holland tunics secured with broad black belts, building a stone fence. They were, evidently, unaccustomed to such labor; they were prodigiously industrious; but their faces, their bodies, were strained, and they were, obviously, short of wind. Two other things impressed Nicholas — their flowing beards and intense earnestness. At the edge of the labor a young man in a velvet tunic and a small brimless cap was reading aloud . . . some stuff about a truth unconscious of the physical. He had the gig stopped and, in a firm voice, he asked if Miss Luin was in the vicinity.

"You will find her at the Nest," he was informed. The reading and work, momentarily interrupted, were resumed, and Elliset spoke again with a quick impatience. "Where," he demanded, "is the Nest?" After a moment he was answered over a shoulder. It was the small building, the schoolhouse, opposite the entrance to the Farm. He drove on slowly with an increasing antagonism to all social ventures and Brook Farm in particular. He detested people who were forced to call attention to the peculiarities of their views by peculiar dress. A velvet tunic on a Roxbury fence! Bad manners, he considered, were the first mark of rebellious inferiority. The schoolhouse was just ahead of him; a small bare classroom was empty, but Sabel Luin, he discovered, was in her room above. She appeared at once.

"I am Ambrose Elliset's father," he said, standing beside the gig. He said that audibly telling himself that the situation was serious. Sabel Luin was calm. The word judicious occurred to him. She acknowledged his presence and, at once, asked if he cared to go over the Farm. "I do not," he replied crisply. "I have seen enough already. I came entirely on your account. I should say on Ambrose's." She motioned toward the threshold of the schoolhouse. "We can sit here," she proceeded; "though it would be more comfortable at the Hive." He glanced privately at her ridiculously inadequate skirt and visible knickerbockers. Her hair was floating over her shoulders from under a wreath of red berries.

"Perhaps I ought to warn you," she said, "that I regard you as an individual and not as a parent. Not even Ambrose's." That, Nicholas Elliset suddenly found, didn't upset him. It was pleasant, for the moment, to be inspected personally. By Sabel Luin. "Ambrose told you our plans, or you wouldn't be here. I have nothing to add. The fact is enough." He asked: "Do you intend to live here?" Of course, she answered. "We would die in the world you represent." She fell tranquilly silent and his antagonism to Brook Farm expanded to an angry resentment. "The world I represent is harder to stay alive in than this; there is a certain amount of struggle; a demand for courage and decision."

"Bullfighters," she asserted tersely.

"Exactly," Elliset agreed, "skill and danger. We don't value the flesh too much. That is the trouble with places like this, with you, there is a lot of talk about souls, but it is the body you are really cautious of."

She gazed at him with a slow thoughtfulness. "That never occurred to me," she admitted. "But the body must be saved for more beautiful things than games and commerce and lust. We will make it, in the end, serve the spirit." He smiled down at the short rough expanse of grass before them. "Beautiful things," she repeated. Nicholas indicated her clothes. "Do you call that beautiful? If you want to insist it's useful, all right. Speaking as an individual, I think it's hideous. And your hair! It might be taking in the privacy of your room; but here, publicly, no." Her mouth hardened, but she remained resolutely quiet, self-controlled. "There is no need for our standards of beauty to agree," she pointed out.

"Women, really charming women, at heart are never radical," he informed her. "Specially where dress in concerned. An eccentric woman is either ugly or quite mad. I'm sure when Ambrose first saw you, you were very different from this. Or else I don't know him. At bottom, I'll warn you, he is an Elliset." The old tyranny, she cried. "What is an Elliset? Ambrose is a man. You are a man . . . when you are not being a parent. You are born in the same ignominious manner as the others and you die in the same corruption." The difference, he told her, lay in the middle, between the two extremes. "Ambrose explained something about your education; it was a mistake; it didn't fit you. Your education was precisely like the clothes you now have on. I hope, when you come to Boston, you'll change them."

"I'm not coming," she replied quickly. "I owe you nothing. I have no sense of family responsibility." He gazed at her blandly. "I can't imagine that we shall be

very sentimental about it. It must just be done. Ambrose, you'll find, will insist. I can see he is going to marry you. That, before, wasn't so clear. It's evident, too, that you are entirely honest. You are as honest, I should say, as you are ignorant. I'll add at once that under no conceivable circumstances will Ambrose be penniless. You are quite safe." She cried: "I almost couldn't love him because he was an Elliset and you were rich. I am afraid of it." Her hands were clenched. "I am afraid of myself. My father is bitterly opposed to it." Her father, Nicholas observed coldly, must be a complete fool. She smiled tenderly. "He is a fool," she agreed; "he wants the whole world to be happy and free. He wants to end poverty and disease and slavery. All slavery." Nicholas Elliset asked how. "By a diet of nuts, I suppose. He'd free the Southern negroes. Did he ever mention to you how he proposed to recompense the loss of a few billions of dollars? I don't like nuts — is it his idea of freedom and beauty that I must eat them?"

"There is no beauty where there is meat," she declared; "no justice when men wear the cotton harvested by slaves." It was serious, he repeated to himself. Ambrose to a certainty would marry her. If the wreath of berries were scarlet flowers, hibiscus, about her neck — he interrupted an excessively scandalous thought, a memory, out of the palm-crowned past. He must return to Boston.

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Changing into the flowered Chinese robe Nicholas went into the room where, preparing for the night, Caroline

Elliset was being unhooked by her maid. He sat down, saying nothing; Caroline said nothing. What, he wondered, had she thought of the evening and of Sabel Luin? His own feelings were confused; Nicholas was in complete doubt except for one incontrovertible fact: Ambrose was going to marry her. He made, at last, a tentative remark. "She looked, I thought, very pretty." Caroline said nothing and he continued. "It was impossible to get a just idea of her in the clothes she wore at Brook Farm. I gave her a hint about not wearing them into Boston." Caroline Elliset answered that perhaps it would have been better if she had appeared at dinner in trousers. "Everything would have been quicker. But there was no chance, of course, she'd do that. She would know better. It wouldn't be a part of her plan." Nicholas was vaguely disturbed:

"Do you know, Caroline, I don't believe she has a plan at all. In the sense you mean. God knows she is full of crazy ideas, but to my mind she's incapable of deliberate scheming. Ugly scheming." Caroline Elliset let him see that she was merely impatient. "It is too bad you'd choose this time to be simply masculine," she told him. "It might be supposed that you had more comprehension of life, more penetration, than Ambrose. At his age. I am amused at you, Nicholas." He studied her curiously. Caroline was speaking in a carefully satirical, almost contemptuous, manner. She was apparently wholly cold, yet she gave him the impression of a determined, a bitter, self-suppression. "I should understand," she proceeded, "that men are always like that. Always . . . optimistic. Mostly it's harmless, an innocent sort of vanity, but now —

really, Nicholas, now — it is indefensible, very dangerous. You must bring yourself up sharply. At once. This marriage would be fatal."

"That is rather strong," he objected; "we might say undesirable. I have a different feeling, and a different sense of obligation; from the first I've been certain it can't be stopped. Opposition will only drive Ambrose away from us. The last thing I want. The very last. It seems to me the thing to do, at least for the moment, is privately to take it for granted and then see what can be done. How can we make the best of it?" She didn't answer his sharp demand. Instead she murmured ridiculous: "It can be stopped. Ambrose will get over it." Nicholas leaned tensely forward on the carved arms of his chair. "I can tell you why you are wrong. I happen to know: this is more than the girl — although she might easily be enough — it's a necessity in Ambrose's blood. A need for freedom, for escape from Boston. It is intellectual, but that's unimportant — it's a revolt against authority, against stagnation. A quality very deep in the Ellisets when they are young. It has taken the form of Brook Farm, and been humanized, made a hundred times stronger, by Sabel Luin. If we try to interfere with Ambrose now, it will be fatal."

A faint smile passed swiftly over her eyes. "My dear Nicholas," she informed him, "it is all much simpler than that — a young and sensitive and inexperienced man and a designing girl. A girl much smarter than ordinary and for that reason more dangerous. Of course she didn't wear her trousers to your house. That would have been fatal. But, Nicholas, it would have been honest. I am amazed

at you." He sank back relaxed and thoughtful. There was a certain justice in what Caroline said. "You must tell her that you will give Ambrose no support. He will have no money." Caroline Elliset spoke with a sudden and passionate emphasis. Nicholas gazed at her in an enlightened amazement — she wasn't thinking of Ambrose, of their son, at all, but only consumed by dislike for Sabel Luin. She had been expressing her antagonism to the girl. Entirely personal. Insidiously feminine. It was possible that Caroline would do a great deal of harm. In response he hardened; he suffered a complete loss of sympathy, of the sense of a common existence, with his wife. Nicholas grew, together with this, autocratic; the quarter-deck manner descended on him; there was more than a breath of Oriental despotism.

"I cannot agree with you and it is hopeless for me to try. In an important way I am more responsible for Ambrose than you are. I am best able to measure his future responsibilities. I wouldn't consider telling Sabel Luin that my son would be penniless. The fact is I have already assured her of the exact opposite. I will say again that, in my opinion, this marriage can't be stopped. It isn't, naturally, ideal; I'll agree with you that it looks actually unfortunate; if it could be broken up I'd act against it; it can't; I won't. What, then, is the thing to do? The thing to do is make the best of it. We might be very successful there."

Caroline Elliset turned sharply and looked at him. She stood rigidly and a bright color rose in her cheeks. Nicholas said nothing. He was seated with his knees crossed under the folds of Chinese silk, his hands were at ease, and

his gaze bland. A crisis, he realized, had swept upon them: he had never seen Caroline so stirred. For the first time in their lives she was absolutely inimical to him. Caroline was positively vindictive. He had, at the same time, never seen her so handsome. The woman before him he had never possessed, he had hardly guessed at. It occurred to Nicholas Elliset that, in leaving his tempestuous youth in the East, he had done her, he had done them both, an injustice. Useless to think of that now. He hoped life would be more vivid for Ambrose.

"No," he repeated more reasonably, "I cannot agree with you. We must regard this marriage as accomplished. The unfortunate parts are Sabel Luin's education, her ideas, and Brook Farm. I don't want Ambrose to be dressed like a European peasant in West Roxbury. I don't want him married to a woman with her hair let down in public. We can do nothing with Ambrose, as you ought to recognize; so we must turn our attention to Sabel. She is, whether you like it or not, fundamentally a beautiful girl. I said fundamentally. And, though she doesn't know it, she loves beautiful things. She is hungry for them. I watched her here, at dinner. She didn't ask for nuts. The fact is she ate a very respectable piece of venison. She took rather a deep drink of punch. Do you mind not interrupting me for a little? I am not as idiotic as I sound. It's unfortunate, Caroline, but probably she can be corrupted. By beauty. It is possible that, without an objection or a word to Ambrose, she can be brought around to most that we think is important. At any rate, I am going to proceed in that direction."

Caroline Elliset slowly turned away from him; she sat

— her back toward him — and her shoulders lost their high rigid line, they were drooping. "How?" she asked after a little, in a spent voice. Nicholas grew correspondingly cheerful, affectionate. "I will give her something," he decided; "something very beautiful. Very valuable. We'll see what that will do. Caroline, if you don't too much object I'll give her the Houqua emeralds! Thirty, forty, thousand dollars on her wrists will have its effect. If I am mistaken it would have been hopeless anyhow. We can't weigh a pair of bracelets against Ambrose. The principal danger is if he'd make her refuse them."

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Moving to a window on India Wharf Nicholas Elliset saw the end of a signalling from the Central Wharf cupola. It had to do with an arrival . . . from the East Indies. He sent for Nancred. "Yes, sir," his chief clerk informed him; "it is the Celestina." The barque, then, was safe. But of course. Nathaniel Bowditch and the chronometer had seen to that. The uncertainty of dead reckoning and lunars were things of the past. The voyage to China was hardly more complicated then a coastwise turn. As instruments and methods were improved, he told himself, men degenerated. A great change was taking place in Boston as well — there was a beginning movement down from the Hill, from Mt. Vernon and Summer Streets to Beacon and the water's edge. Politics had grown confused, its issues meaningless: the shrill local clamor about freeing the slaves, for example, was footless, the agitation for free land in the West folly. The country was

blind to the fact that an irresponsible and highly dangerous power was being permitted to rise — the party of Andrew Jackson, the myth of the people. Even he had practically subscribed to Democratic tactics in the past presidential election.

The more abstract disturbance in Boston was no better, the multiplication of fanatics and fanatical ideas, ideas divorced from all responsibility, the projects of men who owned nothing and were nothing. Brook Farm. His thoughts changed and centered upon Ambrose; he hadn't seen his son yesterday or this morning. Nicholas wondered about Sabel Luin. The truth was that she, too, had recalled his youth. Something in her. If, at Ambrose's age, he had seen her he would have been no less engaged than his son. Even now she stirred his imagination. That, of course, was ridiculous, and he firmly crushed any personal regard for her. His mind, lately, had been full of such nonsense. Lunar observations.

He had allowed himself to fall into a state of sentimentality worse than any boy's. Nicholas had a peculiar hatred for unbecoming vices in men, vices out of their appropriate years. His son Ambrose was announced. Ambrose was inattentively dressed and haggard, his directness of bearing was blurred and his hands were nervous. "I hope you are not occupied," he said. Then he cried: "Those damned bracelets!" After that Ambrose was silent. Nicholas Elliset was careful to wait until he should choose to proceed. "It's not them, really," he went on finally. "It's women. I have made up my mind never to get married. It will kill me, but that is better than a surrender to —" he shifted his speech. "I didn't approve

of Sabel having the bracelets, and you will remember I warned you that I should advise selling them. They would have paid the whole indebtedness of Brook Farm. Sabel agreed with me at first. She said it would be wicked for her to keep them. Neither of us approved of — of emeralds. Why should they be worth so much? Why should one woman have the happiness and relief of a hundred idle on her arms? Sabel didn't approve of them, but she put them on. She'd put them on and take them off. She had them in her desk when she was teaching. They went to bed with her.

"I asked her to give them to me and she begged me to wait and take them later. She began to talk about the fact that we had had them a long while; she said we might have no right to sell them. But when I told her we'd give them back, she wouldn't say anything. Damn it, they ruined her. They poisoned her. It was as if their cursed green fire got into her blood. I knew it the minute I saw her with her hair up. Her beautiful free hair in a net. I told her she would have to give up the bracelets or all our future, and she only answered that I was nothing but a boy. All I could do was laugh at her: What had become of her noble sentiments? She insisted they hadn't changed. But then it was over."

"In a way," Nicholas Elliset asserted, "that is a shame. The trouble is you went into all this too quickly. I won't repeat Miss Luin, but say that you depended on theories rather than on fact. It led you into behaving very badly. It was impossible to advise you. What are you thinking of doing?" Ambrose, totally without conviction, replied that he would hold to his resolution of going into Brook

Farm. "It will at least be an escape from the rottenness of — of life." What he meant, Nicholas reflected, was women. "The only thing left for me is the forgetfulness of work. Work for someone else. I won't marry Sabel Luin."

"I thought that was decided," Nicholas told him. "We can put her out of our plans. As I said, it's too bad. But it can't be helped now. You are determined to go to Brook Farm?" Ambrose stared at him miserably. "Yes," he said listlessly. "I am going there to forget. Perhaps, after a long while, my spirit will return." That, Nicholas Elliset agreed, might easily turn out to be true. "However," he added, "I hate to think of the dull and useless years between. The years without any actual pleasure. You are very bitter about women now, but it is astonishing how happy they can make you. There is nothing else quite like them, nothing else takes their place. I'll admit they are not abstract, at rare moments they are not conspicuously noble. But you get hardened to that. You do, for a fact.

"Then, Ambrose, I am very sceptical about any altruistic work. There is something very personal and selfish, very material, about really useful labor. The other is always a little fantastic and usually more than a little futile. I hate to see an Elliset caught by it. Women, of course, are as bad as you've guessed, but, my dear Ambrose, you'd be safer with a woman, a charming woman, than at Brook Farm. Your life, among other things, would be more useful." There was a trace of revived life in the younger man. "Can you be sure I should be more useful married?" he demanded. "Do you think,

well — do you suppose I could bring Sabel back to her old spiritual beauty?"

"Women are never beautiful unless they are happy," Nicholas explained. "You cursed the Houqua emeralds, yet in a few days they changed every idea in Sabel Luin's head. In the direction of happiness, Ambrose. They made her gayer and younger, more engaging to be with." Ambrose Elliset nodded sharply. "I haven't been able to think lately," he admitted. "I may have done Sabel a horrible injustice. Perhaps if I deserted her now it would hurt her always. It may be my duty to marry her no matter what happens." He gazed at his father hopefully.

"You must decide that for yourself," Nicholas said equably. Ambrose rose. "I will do this," he asserted, "I'll sail on the Fannie Bradwick. That will give me time to think. When I come back I'll know everything. My mind will be clear." He moved resolutely toward the door, then stopped. "If I do," he continued, "will you see Sabel occasionally? Ask her to our house. You will have to be rather careful about mother. Sabel thinks mother doesn't completely understand her." Nicholas reassured him. When Ambrose was gone he sat with tight lips and a shadowed brow. His eyes were tired and without any trace of a satirical gleam. Ambrose's rebellion, his sheer youth, was over. He, Nicholas Elliset, had killed it. His own memories were cold, thin, and distant. The Celestina had been to China and returned. To Boston. A barque could make the voyage again, but men went only once to the East, when they were young. He saw that Nancred had come into the room.

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JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

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WILD ORANGES.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922.

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THE DARK FLEECE.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922.

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JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

published his first book, The Lay Anthony, *in* 1914. *A few years later, when the author had definitely taken a place among those living novelists whose annual appearances are looked forward to as events of importance by all sorts and conditions of readers, he recorded with a certain wry amusement that of* The Lay Anthony *in its original edition the public had bought something under a thousand copies. That edition is today a collectors' item of sorts; as are the first editions of Mr. Hergesheimer's subsequent books.*

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